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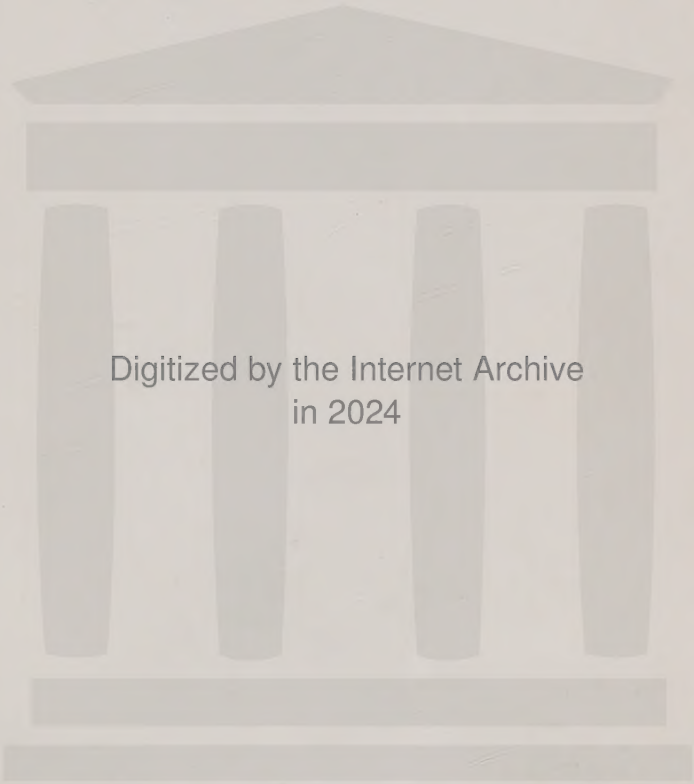
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MOSES AND THE PROPHETS;

CHRIST AND THE APOSTLES;

FATHERS & MARTYRS;

COMPRISING

AN ACCOUNT OF THE PATRIARCHS AND PROPHETS; THE INCARNATION, CRUCIFIXION, AND ASCENSION OF THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD; THE LIVES AND LABORS OF THE APOSTLES, AND PRIMITIVE FATHERS OF THE CHURCH; AND THE SUFFERINGS OF MARTYRS, WHO GAVE UP THEIR LIVES IN DEFENSE OF THE TRUTH.

EMBRACING A PERIOD OF MORE THAN 3000 YEARS.

COMPILED FROM THE WRITINGS OF THE MOST EMINENT AUTHORS OF THE CHRISTIAN ERA; GIVING IN CONDENSED FORM, A RELIABLE AND COMPREHENSIVE SURVEY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, FROM THE EARLY AGES OF THE WORLD, DOWN TO MODERN TIMES.

BY J. E. STEBBINS.

ILLUSTRATED WITH STEEL ENGRAVINGS.

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PREFACE.

A CLASS of writers, with high-wrought imaginations, and fanciful ideas, have sought to embody Truth, and give to us her appropriate form, with its august expression, sublime bearing, and heavenward tendencies; but, when it comes to us verified by individual experience, in numberless instances, it appeals to our hearts with more power than all the ideal presentations we can have, though they be drawn ever so skillfully. Considered as an ideal thing, it may indeed have a claim to beauty; but, truth, in the abstract, might be presented to us a thousand times, and win from us an indifferent admiration compared with that we are compelled to give it, when the practical demonstration of it comes before us in the scenes of actual life. Allowed to have its legitimate effect upon the mind and character, it makes broader and deeper the impress of immortality, elevates the nature of man, enlarges his capacity, and ennobles his whole being.

The lives of holy men, who have walked with God in any age of the world, furnish us with pleasing exhibitions of the power of living truth; but, the characters of Sacred Writ stand out incomparably superior to all others, inasmuch as they are not measured by the imperfect standard of human judgment, but truthfully, faithfully represented by the impartiality of heaven-selected, heaven-directed biographers.

Their hidden springs of thought, and motives of action, are fully displayed, and their example held forth for encouragement and warning, as the case demands.

It is a fact which should serve to hallow their memories, and invest their history with peculiar interest, not exclusively to the

christian reader, but to all those whose part in the common lot of humanity ally them to kindred hopes and feelings, similar temptations and trials with them.

Not only should we take an occasional review of these records, but make them our study. Let us be often found contemplating the sublime confidence of the Father of the Faithful, which induced him at a providential call to leave country and home, that he might become an instrument in the accomplishment of the Divine purposes.

Let us look at the meekness, the energy, the unwearied devotion of him who despised the gorgeousness of the Egyptian court, and led, with patient fidelity, the host of God on through the tedious paths of the wilderness, regardless of his own ease and advantage, content to know he trod the path by heaven designed.

Let us follow Joseph through all the changes of his life; through the vale of sorrow to his post of honor and distinction; Samuel, from his early dedication to his royal dignity; David, in all the varied phases of his existence, and learn from all how admirably adapted is our holy religion for any and every emergency; how transcendently superior is a life regulated by gospel principles to every other, and how certainly the ultimate terminus of a godly life is radiant with the prospect of a glorious immortality.

Let us regard the words of God's prophetic messengers as one after another they utter the same predictions of God's mysterious plans of mercy to a fallen race; and then turn to the grand fulfillment, the glorious era, ushered in by the advent of Him whose benevolent mission was to reclaim the erring, and save the lost. It was then the majestic orb of eternal truth rose, resplendent with glory, to shed its life-giving beams upon our darkened world. This was the brightest, purest and only perfect manifestation of truth ever made to mortal man.

The life of Christ, his glorious character, heavenly teachings, sublime revelations, together with his pure and spotless example, have always a special claim upon our attention. Repetition can never diminish their interest. Their constant and repeated pre-

sentation to the minds of people should continue to elicit new interest, and call forth a grateful reception from every one.

Visionary enthusiasts have sought models of beauty, and, by various ingenious methods, labored to produce their fair ideal; but, as often have they fallen below their original standard. Let such study the life of Christ, and see there the most exalted form of beauty the human mind is capable of conceiving. Let them observe how every quality and feature of beauty meet and center in this august personage, the lineaments of whose countenance are radiant with the unmistakable impress of divinity. Every where, through his whole career, from the manger to the cross, is the same ineffable sweetness, the same inimitable perfection.

Having accomplished his gracious designs in coming to the world, he leaves his work with his disciples, in sacred trust, and ascends to heaven, while it remains for us to follow after the divinely commissioned band, and witness the convincing power, the mighty energy of their holy doctrines upon the hearts and minds of men. In them is demonstrated the reality of Christ's religion. It gives a new impulse to all their thoughts and feelings, and carries such an irresistible conviction of its power to multitudes of others that they too are constrained to embrace the proffered good.

From this time the church, for a long period, continues to increase, and stands out a light to surrounding darkness, a joy to earth-weary pilgrims.

The history of the primitive fathers is full of interest. Their self-denying labors, their zeal for the cause of truth, and their efforts to preserve the purity of the church entitle them to veneration.

In those of the Middle Ages some may, perhaps, discern what seems a tincture of superstition, as they read of monastic vows and ascetic discipline; but, let such remember, that was a time when the light of truth was for a season obscured, and the best and holiest of men were more or less subject to the influence.

Dark indeed is the picture when we turn to see opposing forces marshaled against the church, and hear the cries of martyred hosts

from various parts of christendom. It sends a chill to the heart to dwell upon this portion of the church's history; but, where else could we gain such an idea of the genuineness of religion as here? Where else is shown so convincingly its power to sustain under the weight of accumulated suffering?

Theirs was a faithful testimony; a living argument. They triumphed over death in all its forms, and thus proved to the world the strength of the foundation on which their hopes rested; the certainty of their admission to the white-robed throng who reach the heavenly heights through the refining fires of earthly tribulation. Their spirits reflected heaven's own light, and mortal touch could not dim their brightness.

They might destroy the casket in which the jewel was kept, but the gem would only be transferred to a place where its lustre would never be tarnished, its safety never endangered.

These histories are not for a few, who, with sober interest in sober things, occasionally turn aside to wonder and admire the strength of character, loftiness of purpose, and singleness of aim often apparent; but, they are commended to every one as containing matters of highest moment, deeply affecting their truest happiness, and well worthy their most attentive perusal and careful imitation.

Collected and arranged in comprehensive form, the reader is presented with an outline of the christian church, its founders and supporters, from the early ages of the world down to comparatively recent times.

Viewed as a whole, it is a most sublime argument on the power of christianity as exercised on our sin-ruined race, and proclaims, in silent yet eloquent terms, the vitality, the energy of that heavenly principle infused into the heart of man by the regenerating influence of the Divine Spirit.

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Moses and the Prophets.

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CHAPTER I.

Moses.

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WHILE Israel lay under long and heavy oppression in Egypt, the man appointed to be the deliverer was born, and was undergoing the training requisite for the office he was destined to bear. This man was Moses.

He stands preëminent among the prophets, as one who not only enjoyed the continual prophetic afflatus, but had such visions of and intercourse with God, as no other one ever had.

He was the son of Amram and Jochebed, both of the tribe of Levi, and was born A. M. 2433, B. C. 1571.

The circumstances of his infancy are well known, yet they are always instructive to dwell upon, as affording ample and convincing proof of God's particular care for his creatures.

The king of Egypt issued an edict to destroy all the male children of the Hebrews.

The personal beauty of Moses, added to parental affection, seems to have induced the parents to hazard every thing to preserve their child's life; they therefore hid him for three months; but finding from circumstances that they could keep him secret no longer, they were determined to abandon him wholly to the care of Providence.

Having provided a little vessel of bulrushes, or flags pitched, and thus rendered impervious to the water, they set him afloat on the river Nile, and sent his sister Miriam to watch the event.

The daughter of Pharaoh coming to that part of the river,

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seeing the vessel afloat, commanded it to be brought to her; and being struck with the helpless state and beauty of the child, judging that it belonged to one of the Hebrews, determined to preserve its life, and adopt it for her own. Through the sister's influence it was committed to its mother's care; the princess being entirely ignorant of the relation that existed between them.

At a proper age he was taken to the Egyptian court, and educated there as the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and by his superior attainments in learning and wisdom, became very eminent. Here he appears to have stayed nearly forty years. Indeed, his life seems to have been divided into three remarkable periods, each embracing the same length of time. The one already mentioned; the forty years he sojourned in the land of Midian, in a state of preparation for his great and important mission; and the *forty years* he guided, led, and governed the Israelites under the express direction and authority of God.

It was in consequence of having killed one of the oppressors of his brethren, he was obliged to take refuge in Midian, where, entering into the service of Jethro, a priest or prince of that country, he married his daughter Zipporah, by whom he had two sons, Eleazer and Gershom, and continued as the guardian of the flocks of his father-in-law for forty years. At the conclusion of this time, while engaged in his wonted employment, God manifested himself to him, and gave him a commission to bring Israel out of Egypt.

A voice from a "*burning bush*" arrested his attention; and the speaker announced himself as the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. He declared that he had beheld with divine compassion the miseries of his people; and that the time, the long-appointed time for their deliverance had come. This doubtless made the heart of Moses glad. The closing words, however, fill him with consternation, for it declared that *he* was to go back to Egypt to present himself before the king then reigning, and to demand for Israel leave to depart.

This filled him with unfeigned astonishment, and a sense of his unfitness for the work elicited the question, "Who am

I, that I should go unto Pharaoh?" Not even Jehovah's promise, "I will be with thee," could overcome his reluctance then, and he prayed to be released. But he was the man appointed for the task; for this he had been born; for this preserved; for this trained; and there was no escape for him.

He went on the Divine errand, became associated with his elder brother Aaron, opened his commission to the Egyptian king, and wrought several striking miracles to prove the truth of his mission.

The king refusing to let the people go, God afflicted him and the land with ten grievous plagues; but when the climax of suffering was reached, and the *Destroying Angel* swept by, the alarmed monarch bade them depart, and with Moses for their leader, the liberated multitude departed joyfully from their oppressors.

In their march God directed them toward the Red Sea, and when they came in sight of that waste of waters, to human appearance their course was stayed.

But God would magnify himself and his messenger before all Israel, and at his command, Moses lifted up his rod upon the waters, and forthwith a pathway through the deep was opened for them.

They passed safely the marvelous channel, which the Egyptians essaying to do, were drowned; thus was consummated by one fearful stroke, the deliverance of Israel, and the overthrow of the Egyptians.

Having led the Israelites into the deserts of Arabia, commonly called the *wilderness*, God gave them the most signal manifestations of his power and goodness in a series of miracles, and delivered to Moses, their leader, that *information* and those *laws* which are contained in the Pentateuch.

How solemn his position on the sacred mount, in intimate converse with God, and express contemplation of his majesty. No wonder, that with this holy state of mind, he should come down to an idolatrous people, with words of severe rebuke for their strange departure.

His intercessions to the God of Heaven for them insured the Divine forgiveness, and he led them on to the verge of

the promised land, though, alas! it was not for him to enter. Once, even he had wandered from the prescribed path of duty, by reason of which he had been excluded from the fair borders of Canaan.

As they drew near their inheritance, it became manifest the great work of Moses was accomplished, and it only remained for him to render up his life. The people for whom he had so long cared, and whom he had so anxiously led, were about to cease their wanderings, and enter upon the full possession of the blessings of freedom in a peaceful land.

Yet it was fit that before this venerable servant of God laid down his charge, he should see that part of it which could be transmitted, deposited in proper hands, that he might die in the comfortable assurance that the great work he had undertaken might be vigorously prosecuted after his decease.

Ever since the fatal day of Meribah, the prophet knew that he was doomed to die without setting the sole of his foot upon the land which was to form the heritage of his people. But now he receives a distinct intimation, as his brother had before, that the appointed time was come, and like him, he is directed to ascend the neighboring mountain, there to render up his life.

Observe well how he receives this intimation.

What is the foremost thought in his mind?

Nothing that concerns himself,—no regret of his own; all his thought is for the welfare of the people. "Let Jehovah, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, who may go out before them, and who may go in before them, and who may lead them out, and who may bring them in; that the congregation of the Lord be not as sheep which have no shepherd." Here is the same loftiness of spirit, rising above every thought of self,—the same zeal for the honor of God,—the same devoted concern for the welfare of the people, which had hitherto marked his whole career. "We may wade through folios of history and biography, narrating the mighty deeds of warriors, statesmen,

and professed patriots, before we find another case equal to this in interest."

The suit of Moses was heard, and Joshua was solemnly inaugurated as the future leader of the Hebrew host. Nothing then remained for the prophet to do, but to pour out his heart before the people in lofty odes and eloquent blessings. Then he retired to the appointed mountain, that he might before his death survey the goodly land in which the people were to establish that noble commonwealth which he had so laboriously organized.

Who can tell the eagerness of that glance which he threw over the magnificent country that opened upon his view?

Upon this scene his eye closed, and in the recesses of the mountain, out of the sight of the host, in a hollow of the hilly region, where he died, his corpse was deposited. Had the spot been known, it would, without question, have become first the goal of pious pilgrimages, and then perhaps, by the apotheosis of one so venerated, a scene of idolatrous worship. It is in harmony with the self-renouncing spirit which his whole life displayed, that means were taken to prevent the place of his last rest from being visited by the coming generations, which would have such good cause to revere and bless his name.

Thus he died in the one hundred and twentieth year of his age.

Care, labor, and years had made no inroads upon his constitution, for it is particularly marked that "his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated," that he preserved all the vivacity of youth and the vigor of manhood to a period in which, even at that time, old age made its greatest depredations upon those who had no other support than what the common course of nature afforded.

The eulogium or character given of him by the Spirit of God, though very concise, is yet very full and satisfactory: "And there arose not a prophet since in Israel, like unto Moses, whom Jehovah knew face to face; in all the signs and wonders which the Lord sent him to do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his

land; and in all that mighty hand and in all the great terror which Moses showed in the sight of all Israel."

He is called the *servant of God;* and he has farther this high character, that as a *servant,* he was *faithful* to God *in all his house.*

He faithfully discharged the trust reposed in him; and totally forgetting *himself,* and his own secular interest, with that also of his family, he labored incessantly to promote God's honor and the people's welfare, which on many occasions he showed were dearer to him than his *own life.*

Moses was in every respect a *great man;* for every virtue that constitutes genuine nobility was concentrated in his mind, and fully displayed in his conduct.

He ever conducted himself as a man conscious of his *own integrity,* and of the guidance and protection of God, under whose orders he constantly acted. He therefore betrays no confusion in his views, nor indecision in his measures; he was ever without corroding *anxiety,* because he was conscious of the rectitude of his motives, and that the cause which he espoused was the cause of God, and that his power and faithfulness were pledged for his support.

His *courage* and fortitude were unshaken and unconquerable, because his reliance was unremittingly fixed on the unchangeableness of Jehovah.

He left Egypt having an eye to the recompense of reward in another world, and never lost sight of this grand object; he was therefore neither discouraged by difficulties, nor elated by prosperity. He who in Egypt refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, thereby renouncing the claim he might have had on the Egyptian throne, was never likely to be influenced by secular views in the government of the miserable multitudes which he led out of that country. His renunciation of the *Court of Pharaoh,* and its advantages, was the amplest proof that he neither sought nor expected honor or emolument in the *wilderness,* among a people who had scarcely any thing but what they received by immediate miracle from the hand of God.

His *disinterestedness* is particularly observable; his moral character almost *immaculate.*

As the mind tries, however, to rest as it were unconsciously upon the prominent points of the character which his career evinces, and which we discover in most other men, we find ourselves unexpectedly baffled. All the great men of sacred as well as of profane history, possessed some prominent virtue or quality, which stood out in bolder relief than their other perfections. We think of the faith of Abraham, of the conscientiousness of Joseph, of the contrition of David, of the generosity of Jonathan, of the zeal of Elijah,—but what do we regard as the dominant quality of Moses? It is not to be found. The mind is perplexed in the attempt to fix on any. It is not firmness, it is not perseverance, it is not disinterestedness, it is not patriotism, it is not confidence in God, it is not meekness, it is not humility, it is not forgetfulness of self.

It is not any *one* of these.

It is *all* of them. His virtues, his graces, were all equal to each other; and it was their beautifully harmonious operation and development which constituted his noble and all but perfect character.

This was the greatness of Moses,—this was the glory of his character. It is a kind of character rare in any man—and in no man, historically known, has it been so completely manifested.

The exigences of even those great affairs which engaged his thoughts, did not, and could not, call forth on any *one* occasion, *all* the high qualities with which he was gifted. It is rarely possible to see more than one high endowment in action at the same time. But we find Moses equal to every occasion,—he is never lacking in the virtue which the occasion requires him to exercise; and by this we know that he possessed them all.

When we reflect that Moses possessed all the learning of his age, and that he wanted none of the talents which constitute human greatness,—while we know that such endowments are not invariably accompanied by high character and noble sentiments,—we honor his humility more than his glory, and above all, venerate that Divine wisdom which raised up this extraordinary man, and called him forth at the moment when the world had need of him.

On the whole, it may be remarked, that when God calls any person to an extraordinary work, he so orders it, in the course of his Providence, that he shall have every qualification necessary for that work. This was emphatically the case with Moses; his Hebrew extraction, the comeliness of his person, his Egyptian education, his natural firmness and constancy of character, all concurred with the influences of the Divine Spirit, to make him in every respect such a person, one among millions, who was every way qualified for the great work which God had given him to do; and who performed it according to the mind of his Maker.

"Servant of God, well done!"

CHAPTER II.

Abraham.

GOD'S PURPOSE RESPECTING ABRAHAM; LEAVES HIS COUNTRY; RECEIVES A PROMISE OF A SON; REALIZES THAT PROMISE; IS COMMANDED TO OFFER HIM A BURNT OFFERING; DISTRIBUTES HIS POSSESSIONS; DIES AT AN ADVANCED AGE.

FTER the flood, the sacred narrative rapidly conducts us to the man, the history of whose descendants, their sins, their sorrows, their excellences, their rewards, and their punishments forms the great theme of the remainder of the Old Testament.

The purpose of the Most High was to choose a man, and in him a family and a nation, to be His witness upon the earth, and the repository of ancient truths, and of Messianic hopes, until the fullness of redeeming time should come.

The person on whom this choice fell was Abram, the son of Terah, of the line of Shem, whose native place was "Ur of the Chaldees."

The only thing related of him previous to his seventieth

HAGAR AND ISHMAEL

Gen. . . . .

year, is the mere fact that he took a wife, whose name was "Sarai."

Ancient history and tradition undertake to fill up this blank in his early history by informing us of his search after the true God, his discovery of the impotence of idolatry, and of his persecution for righteousness' sake. Nevertheless, seeing that Abram must have already known the God who required him to quit for His sake all that he held dear, and whom he even to that extent obeyed; and seeing that he had acquired this knowledge while the member of an idolatrous family, he had doubtless meditated much on these things, and had been favored with special communications by that God who intended to make his name great, and to render him a blessing to many nations.

At seventy years of age the word of the Lord came to Abram, saying, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land that I shall show thee."

The country to which he was to go was not indicated; he was simply required to detach himself from all the ties of kindred and country, and proceed in a direction to be indicated. This was a hard command, but Abram obeyed it, and forthwith quitted his native land.

His father and brother were, however, willing to go with him. But they halted on the way, at Haran, in Mesopotamia, from some unknown cause, till the death of Terah, when the command to Abram was renewed, and the country to which he was to proceed was clearly indicated.

This was the land of Canaan, destined to become the possessions of this man's descendants.

It may be conjectured that the Divine intention was to isolate Abram and his seed completely, by removing him to a strange land; it did not consist with that purpose that he should thus be accompanied by his family into Canaan; but that, in regard to his filial affection, he was graciously permitted to remain at Haran, and lay his father's head in the tomb, before any further indication as to the course of his journey was afforded.

As he comes to the very land in which he is promised so

much blessedness, he finds, instead of plenty, a *grievous famine!* Who in his circumstances would not have gone back to his own country and kindred?

Still he is not troubled; prudence directs him to turn aside and go to Egypt, till God shall choose to remove this famine. Is it to be wondered at that in this *tried* state, he should have serious apprehensions for the safety of his life?

Sarai, his affectionate wife and faithful companion, he supposes he shall lose; her beauty, he suspects, will cause her to be desired by men of power, whose will he shall not be able to resist. If he appear to be her *husband*, his death he supposes to be certain; if she pass for his *sister*, he may be well used on her account; he will not *tell a lie*, but he is tempted to *prevaricate* by suppressing a *part* of the truth.

Here his faith was deficient. He still credited the *general promise*, and acted on that faith in reference to it; but he did not use his faith in reference to *intervening circumstances*, to which it was equally applicable.

This course of conduct, however, so far from producing the desired results, was attended by those he most dreaded and labored to avert.

The counsel of the Lord remained unshaken, and therefore he was delivered.

The *peace-loving* spirit of Abram is beautifully exemplified in his intercourse with Lot, where he sacrifices his worldly advantage for the sake of *harmony*, but what he lost in mere earthly gain was more than compensated in his Lord's blessing. He became rich and prosperous; victorious and great.

Repeated manifestations of God's presence were granted, and promises of incalculable good made to him.

One in his ninety-ninth year assured him of the all-sufficiency of God's *power;* gave him a surety of the fulfillment of the promise which had previously been made, of the birth of a son, and a numerous posterity.

Then was his name changed to *Abraham*, a name more significant of the promise.

Again the Lord appeared with a confirmation of the

good, attended by angels; and here we are furnished with that beautiful example of Eastern hospitality; at once *simple* and *grand.* Notwithstanding a numerous retinue of servants, Abraham and Sarah with their own hands minister to the weary strangers, withholding nothing their comfort demanded. While directing them on their way, the Lord disclosed to Abraham his purpose concerning Sodom and Gomorrah, which gave rise to those successive intercessions, that the place might be spared in consideration of a sufficient number of righteous persons being found; at first *fifty*, and finally reduced to *ten.*

The lack of even these insured the destruction of the city, and Abraham soon left Mamre, and journeyed toward Gerar. On his way he seems to have been guilty of *prevarication,* similar to that shown on a former occasion, in denying the true relation between himself and Sarah. It was an unworthy expedient, which the circumstances may *palliate,* but not justify.

The time hastened for the fulfillment of the promise, and to their inexpressible joy, Isaac was given unto them. "The child grew and was weaned," and amid the rejoicings of the feast made on that eventful day, "Sarah saw the son of Hagar, the Egyptian, which she had borne unto Abraham, mocking."

This excited her indignation, and procured the expulsion of both mother and son. With a scanty supply of provision, and a bottle of water, they were sent away, and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba, till both were well nigh spent, and death seemed inevitable.

To screen her child from the intense heat, Hagar placed him in the shade, and departed a little way that she might not witness the dying scene.

As she sat in tearful silence, her eyes were opened to discover a well of water, upon which she eagerly filled her bottle, and hastened to the fainting sufferer, who was immediately revived by the refreshing draught, and enabled to go on his way.

For some time he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran, but afterward had intercourse with Isaac, as will be seen.

But little is said of Isaac's early youth, yet the momentous period in his history arrives.

Isaac, the heir of the promises, has grown up to be a young man, probably not less than twenty years of age; and the father rests happy in his tent, blessed with the favor of God, and beholding in his son the accomplishment of all his hopes.

Suddenly the command comes: "Take now thy son, thine only son, Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of."

Every word was fit to rend his heart, and did doubtless rend it. And what did he say? Nothing.

We may conceive much that he might have said; but Abraham said nothing; he *did* as he was commanded.

He was not only *obedient*, but he was prompt and forethoughtful in his obedience.

There might be no suitable materials for the intended sacrifice at the spot to which he was going; he therefore prepares everything before he sets out; even the wood to form the fire which is to consume his son, he prepares and takes with him. He appears anxious that there shall be no sign on his part of lingering, reluctant delay. He rises "early in the morning," and attended by two servants and his only child, proceeds on his painful journey.

What must have been his feelings as upon the third day the mountain loomed upon his sight.

Bidding his servants tarry behind, the father and son went on, and what must have been the feelings of the former, as the question fell upon his ear, and touched his heart, "My father, where is the victim?" Doubtless the heart of the youth was satisfied, as the reply came back, "My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering."

They arrive at the spot; the altar is made; the wood is laid on, and Isaac is bound, and laid upon the altar. The father's hand is uplifted to fall upon the life of his son; but it fell not. The stroke is stayed by a quick and sudden word from Heaven to desist, for the purpose was gained.

With fingers tremblingly glad did the father then unbind his son; and with what rejoicing spirits did not both father and son join in offering up the victim which the Lord *had* provided — a ram caught by the horns in a thicket hard by.

The world's history presents nothing like this. The instances which have sometimes been cited as parallel, will not stand comparison with it.

The Lord's own estimate of its importance and value is shown in the crowning recompense of his high approval and blessing; a blessing the most full, emphatic, and solemn ever pronounced by God upon man.

Soon after this he is called to part with his beloved companion, and obtaining from the "sons of Heth" a burying-place, his affectionate Sarah was buried from his sight. Deeply he mourned for her, but doubtless his *faith* enabled him to look up and bless the hand that *took*. He seems now to have reached an advanced age, and to be fully conscious that his earthly pilgrimage was drawing to a close.

Desirous of seeing his son finally settled in life before his departure, he called his faithful confidential servant to his side, and bade him go to his own country and kindred, and select there a partner for Isaac, for there the true religion had been in some measure preserved, and from the pious circles alone he would choose his bosom companion.

A doubt being expressed by Eliezer of his probable success, Abraham replied: "the Lord will send his angel before thee," thus showing his strong confidence in God, that the great designs for which he had brought him from his own kindred to propagate the true religion in the earth would be accomplished; and that therefore, when earthly instruments failed, heavenly ones should be employed.

The Divine blessing secured to them a satisfactory result, and Abraham proceeded to arrange his worldly affairs ere his final exit from earth. Having awarded a portion to each of his sons, he sent them from Isaac, leaving the latter to the undisturbed enjoyment of his whole possession. This done, Abraham "died in a good old age," having seen a hundred threescore and fifteen years.

Satisfied with life, he left it with a hope full of immortality, for he saw the day of Christ and was glad.

His sons Isaac and Ishmael joined in doing the last sad offices to a parent who was an honor to them and to human nature.

Here we see to what a state of moral excellence the grace of God can exalt a character, when there is simple, implicit faith, and prompt obedience. Abraham *walked before God,* and Abraham *was perfect.*

Perhaps no human being ever exhibited a fairer, fuller portrait of the *perfect* man than Abraham. He has manifested in his own person those virtues for which reason and philosophy could scarcely find out names, when trying to sketch the character of their *sophist—wise* or *perfect* man.

Without being under the law, he performed the most essential duties it requires; and as to the gospel, its grand object was that on which he had fixed his eye—that Jesus whose day he rejoiced to see; and as to its *spirit* and *design,* they were wondrously exemplified in that faith which was imputed to him for righteousness, receiving that grace which conformed his whole heart and life to the will of his Maker, and enabled him to persevere unto death.

As a son, as a husband, as a father, as a neighbor, as a sovereign, and above all as a *man of God,* he stands unrivaled; so that under the more exalted and perfect of all dispensations, the gospel of Jesus Christ, he is proposed and recommended as the *model* and *pattern* according to which the *faith, obedience* and perseverance of the followers of the Messiah are to be formed.

Happy for all, if like Abraham, regardless of all consequences, they follow the *directions* of *God's word,* and the *openings* of his *providence,* leaving all events to Him who *doth all things well.*

CHAPTER III.

Isaac.

HIS MARRIAGE; REMOVAL TO GERAR; SETTLEMENT AT BEER SHEBA; IGNORANT BESTOWAL OF BLESSING ON JACOB; HIS BLINDNESS AND FINAL DISSOLUTION.

IN contemplating the history of Isaac, we observe the character of one who was not indeed exempted from his share of the ills which flesh is heir to, but one whose afflictions being private and domestic, called him more particularly to the exercise of patient fortitude and calm endurance, than any public display of signal virtues.

He was emphatically a man of peace, and the example of his piety and christian virtue did more to instruct and bless mankind, than all the conquerors which ever existed, from Nimrod of Assyria down to the present.

The first seventy-five years of the life of Isaac seem to be blended with that of his illustrious father; and so entirely subject was he to the will of his parent, that his own energies were but slightly developed, and his self-reliance scarcely noticeable.

In speaking of him, we shall only take up those particulars of his story which are more personal and peculiar; in which he was an agent or a sufferer.

We find him at a very early period feeling distress and suffering persecution; and it is remarkable that almost all, at least the severest trials, which this patriarch endured, arose from his nearest and dearest relations. Hated and scorned from the very first, by his brother; devoted in sacrifice, of his father; called early to mourn the loss of his affectionate mother; vexed continually with the strife of his jealous sons, struggling for superiority; mortified and grieved to the heart, with the inconsiderate, unwise, idolatrous marriages of his

favorite Esau; practiced upon, and deceived in old age and blindness, by the address and cunning of his wife and younger son; involved in quarrel upon quarrel, with his powerful neighbors, through the rashness and contentiousness of his servants; never faulty, yet throughout unfortunate.

The *memorable transaction* on Mount Moriah presents the character of Isaac to us, in admirable light. It was no less a proof of his faith, than of Abraham himself. As the obedience of the father was prompt and cheerful, so was that of his son. If the resignation of Abraham merits praise, the submission of Isaac claims no less; for his consent must undoubtedly have been obtained. In both it was "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, and a reasonable service;" and the blessing pronounced from heaven on that occasion, applied to both, equally and in the same manner.

The next important event of Isaac's life, upon the sacred record, is his marriage. Swallowed up in sorrow for the loss of his mother, or absorbed in devout meditation, he leaves all concern about his future fortunes, and establishment in the world, to the care and wisdom of his father.

He commissioned his faithful servant to go to his own kindred, to choose a companion for his son, and with duly solemn preparation the messenger went forth on his important errand.

In the various particulars of this transaction, we have a beautiful and interesting picture of the simplicity of ancient manners and customs. It is an excellent commentary upon that injunction of the wise man, "In all thy ways acknowledge God, and he shall direct thy paths." Abraham's servant implored the Divine guidance, and hardly had he finished his address to heaven, when lo, Providence, which works unseen, unknown, unobserved by us, brought the subject of his prayer, the object of his search, directly before him, in the person of the fair Rebekah.

Fully satisfied she was the destined bride of Isaac, he took her to his master's tent, and as he neared those peaceful shades, where was the one *particularly interested* in his return?

He had gone out "to meditate, or to pray, in the field at the eventide." This is the leading, prevailing lineament in

the good man's character; a heart tuned to devotion, an eye continually directed toward heaven.

The faith of Isaac, placid and contemplative, sought the happiness of communion with God in calmness and solitude, and ever satisfied itself with the secret, untumultuous delight of beholding his family built up, and the promises of God advancing to their accomplishment.

He continued to abide in his father's tent, quietly tending his flocks for many years. God's blessing attended him, and sons were given them.

Death came, at length, and removed from him his aged parent. Hitherto he had trusted every thing to the wisdom and affection of his kind father; but now, his own children growing up fast upon him, he is under the necessity of arising and exerting himself.

We accordingly find him, with the prudent sagacity of a good husband, father, and master, directing the removal of his family from place to place, as occasionally circumstances rendered necessary; forming alliances with his powerful neighbors, for their mutual security; and presiding in the offices of religion, his favorite employment.

The distresses which embittered the remainder of Isaac's life, were chiefly internal and domestic,—having their source in his own infirmity—a fond partiality in favor of his eldest son. While his family was thus torn with internal dissension, Providence was pleased to visit him with a grievous external calamity.

A famine in the land made it necessary for him to seek a new home. By Divine intimation he turned aside from Egypt, the land which had afforded his father shelter, and retired to Gerar, a city of Palestine.

Here he grew so rich and great, the people became envious of him. That dark, malignant passion prompted his jealous foes to cut off one source of his wealth, by depriving him of his wells of water, and thus destroying his flocks.

The peace-loving spirit of Isaac prudently gives way, and withdrawing the hated object from before the eyes of envy, he pitches his tent in the *valley* of Gerar.

He finds himself still pursued by the pride and selfishness of his neighbors; but at length conquers by yielding,—a victory the most certain, the most honorable, and the most satisfactory.

Finally, to prevent, as far as in him lay, every ground of quarrel, he fixes his residence at a still greater distance. "He went up from thence to Beer sheba;" where, feeling himself at home, after so many removals, he at once pitches his tent for repose, and builds an altar for religion; and the hatred and violence of man is lost and forgotten in communion with God.

A delightful calm of eighteen years ensued, of which no traces remain to inform or instruct men, but which from the well known character of this patriarch, we may well suppose were spent in such a manner as to be had in everlasting remembrance before God.

At the close of this period, his domestic tranquillity was again cruelly disturbed, and, by his favorite son; who, in the fortieth year of his own life, and hundredth of his father's, introduced two idolatrous wives at once into the holy family.

Whether it was from the vexation occasioned by this event, from disease, from accident, or some natural weakness in the organs of sight, we are not informed, but we find Isaac, in the one hundred and thirty-fifth year of his life, in a state of total blindness; and he was probably visited with the loss of that sense at a much earlier period. Forty-five years, at least, of his earthly pilgrimage, were passed in this dark and comfortless state.

At the beginning of this period, we find Isaac sensible of his growing infirmities, feeling the approach of death, though ignorant of the day of it, and anxious to convey the double portion, the patriarchal benediction, and the covenant promise, according to the bent of his natural affection, to his elder and more beloved son.

He calls him with accents of paternal tenderness, and proposes to him the mingled gratification of pursuing his own favorite amusement, of ministering to his fond father's pleasure, and of securing to himself the great object of his ambition and desire, the *blessing*, with all its valuable effects.

Then follows the deception of Rebekah and Jacob, with all its unhappy consequences; depriving the elder of his birthright, and securing the blessing to the younger.

The alienation of the two brothers rendered the departure of one necessary, and with his father's farewell benediction Jacob left the paternal roof, which could shelter and protect him no longer.

Isaac lived to be refreshed with the good tidings of the success of the blessing, and the happy increase of Jacob's family.

At last, old and full of days, he drops into the grave. He was gathered to his people, at the advanced age of an hundred and fourscore years. Thus lived and died Isaac, the son of Abraham, a man of contemplation, piety, and peace. A man of few and slight infirmities; of many and eminent virtues.

A man whom Providence tried with multiplied and severe afflictions; and whom faith strengthened to bear them with patience and fortitude.

His excellencies are such as all may, by due cultivation, acquire; his virtues such as all may imitate.

His faults are those to which even good men are liable, and which they are the more concerned to avoid or to amend.

CHAPTER IV.

Jacob.

JOURNEY TO PADAN-ARAM; HEAVENLY MANIFESTATION AT BETHEL; DECEPTIVE MARRIAGE WITH LEAH; OBTAINS RACHEL; RETURNS TO HIS KINDRED; MOURNS THE LOSS OF JOSEPH; IS RESTORED TO HIM, AND HIS DECLINING DAYS RENDERED HAPPY.

THE person on whose history we are now entering, is the third in order and succession of the illustrious three who are distinguished in Scripture as the covenant friends of God, and the ensamples of all them who in after ages should believe. "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac,

and the God of Jacob." Thus it is spoken of the men whom the King of Kings delighteth to honor; and what is rank and title, among men, compared to this?

Jacob was, by the ordinance of heaven, destined to pre-ëminence and superiority before he was born, and he who could have raised him to the rights of primogeniture, in the ordinary course of nature, was pleased,—such is divine sovereignty,—to bestow this advantage upon him, by the concurrence of various providential events.

By nature Jacob seemed formed for social and domestic life, abiding at home in the tents, attending to family affairs, cultivating filial affections, and living in the exercise of filial duties.

The first action of his life, however, which we find recorded by the sacred historian, is by no means calculated to give us a favorable impression of his heart.

It is the subtility with which he stole the prophetic benediction, and raised up against himself an implacable foe in the person of his own brother.

From this time he was forced to become an exile and a wanderer from his father's house, in order to insure the safety of his life. *Solitary* and *alone*, with no inheritance but the staff in his hand, he turned his attention to a distant land; the early home of his mother.

The uneasy reflections arising from solitude, and inspired by a gradual removal from the scenes of his youthful and happy days, must have been greatly embittered to Jacob, by the consciousness of his having brought all upon himself; by the keenness of disappointment, in the very moment when the spirits were wound up to their highest tone through success, and by total darkness and uncertainty with respect to his future fortunes.

However, the cheerfulness of light, the pleasing change and variety of natural objects as he journeyed on, the ardor and confidence of youthful blood and spirits, carry him with confidence and joy through the day.

But ah! what is to become of him when the sun declines, and the evening shadows lengthen?

Overtaken at once by hunger and fatigue, darkness and apprehension, where shall he seek shelter—where find repose? Happily, calamity strengthens that soul which it is unable to subdue.

The strong hand of necessity is upon Jacob; submit he must, and therefore he submits with alacrity.

Behold the heir of Abraham and of Isaac, without a place where to lay his head; that head which maternal tenderness had taken pleasure to pillow so softly, and to watch so affectionately.

"He lighted upon a certain place and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillow, and lay down in that place to sleep."

Truly, "Sweet are the uses of *adversity*."

Jacob, removed from his earthly parents, is but the nearer to his Heavenly Father; a stranger in the waste howling wilderness, he is at home with God. Cares perplex his waking thoughts, but angels in bands lull his anxious breast to peace. Who does not pity the pilgrim as the evening shades gather and close around his head? Who does not envy his felicity when the morning light appears, and with it, the recollection of a night passed in communion with God?

The great plan of Divine Providence, upholding all things, observing all things, subduing all things to his will, was feelingly conveyed to him in his night vision.

It was much to hear a repetition of the covenant of God with Abraham and Isaac, his fathers, ratified and confirmed to himself. It was much to hear the blessing lately pronounced over him by the prophetic lips of his earthly parent, conveyed to his ear by a voice infinitely more sacred. It was much to hear that the land which he then occupied with his weary limbs, as a way-faring man who continueth but for a night, should afterward be given to him and to his seed for a possession. It was much to hear from the mouth of God himself the blessed assurance of protection through his journey, of success in his undertaking, and of a

safe return to his native home. It was much to hear of a posterity, innumerable as the sand upon the sea-shore, and spreading to the four winds of heaven. But the essence of all these promises, the joy of all this joy, was to hear the renewed, the reiterated promise of a seed descending from him, in whom "all the families of the earth should be blessed."

What could Jacob ask? What had God to bestow more than this?

What wonder if the mind of the patriarch was filled with holy dread, as he awoke conscious of Divine presence. He arose, and erected a monument of such simple materials as the place afforded, to the memory of the heavenly vision, which he was desirous to impress forever upon his heart.

Cheered and supported by the remembrance of this vision, and animated with the hope of a happy meeting of his friends and relations at Padan-aram, he went on his way rejoicing; and guided, protected and sustained by an indulgent Providence, he arrived in safety.

A protracted stay in the family of his uncle only served to enlist more strongly his affection for the beautiful maiden who had met him upon his first coming. The consent of all parties gained, he sought to make her his own; but he who by subtility and falsehood stole away the blessing intended for his brother, is punished for his deceit by finding a Leah where he expected a Rachel.

He who availed himself of an undue advantage to arrive at the right of the first-born, has an undue advantage taken of him, in having the first-born put in the place of the younger.

The cherished object of his affections, however, must be his, and seven additional years of servitude are willingly endured to gain the prize.

Diligently regarding the interests of his father-in-law, he remained with him, till impressed with his obligation to provide for the maintenance of his own numerous family, he wished for distinct possessions and another home. The selfish Laban could not forego the blessings he had received on Jacob's account, and refused to let him go.

But after twenty years of hard service, he wearied with

the exactions of his ungenerous kinsman, and set out secretly for the land of Canaan. He was hotly pursued, and with a hostile disposition by his father-in-law, and overtaken on the seventh day in Mt. Gilead. Providence once more interposes for him, and a covenant of peace and good will is ratified between them, which enables Jacob to go on his way toward Canaan rejoicing.

Scarcely had the farewell been pronounced, ere we find the angels of God pressing forward to meet him, and in the sanctuary scene which followed, a new and honorable name was given to Jacob, even *Israel,—prince with God.*

Fondly had this ended when the interview with Esau opened on. It came, and with it an agreeable surprise, for he met only *kindness* and *affection*, where he expected *anger* and resentment. They soon parted,—Esau to his own possessions in Mt. Seir,—Jacob to visit his aged father, who was still living.

What mixed emotions must have agitated his mind as he presented his family to his venerable parent! How fervent must have been their gratitude, as they mutually recounted the kindness of God to them in those long years of separation. Painful reflections, indeed, mingled with joyous feeling, for when he looked upon his particularly beloved children, Joseph and Benjamin, he could but think of his dear departed Rachel, whose precious dust they had left behind.

He purchased an estate, spread his tent, but where is *rest* for the patriarch? Calamity is yet to succeed calamity, and the climax of suffering seemed at hand, when suddenly his favorite son was torn from him, and his fate to him sealed with oblivion.

At this time, sinking himself into the dust, under the pressure of a burden which nature was unable to sustain, he was called to lay his honored father in the grave, while *grief* itself was hastening him to his last, long home. He knows not yet the providential concurrence of circumstances, that are coming to shed light upon his path, and joy upon his soul. Days of darkness and famine ill betoken them, but such the result should be. When Egyptian plenty attracted

his family thither for supplies, little did the old man's heart conceive what was in store for him there. Much less when his dearest earthly hope—his darling Benjamin, was required, was he conscious of the plan of mercy, God, even then, was working for him.

What overpowering emotions must have been his, when the tidings came back, "Joseph is yet alive," and that too, in a position of distinguished royalty. The splendid retinue sent to convey him to his long-lost son, forbids his doubt, and leaving his home in Canaan, he with all his house seek the promised asylum in a land of plenty, more grateful still as the scene which Joseph graced.

We incline rather to gaze in silence upon that meeting between father and son, for that *long, tearful embrace,* that *rush of feeling,* those overpowering recollections, find not their expression in words.

The presentation to Pharaoh, the sage conduct of the patriarch, the filial devotion of the son, the clemency of the king, all combine to form an admirable picture, such as is rarely given us.

Seventeen years of unruffled tranquillity Jacob passed in Egypt, enjoying the most complete of all human gratifications—that of witnessing the prosperity, and experiencing the attachment of a favorite and dutiful child.

Having obtained the security that his body should be conveyed to the repose of Macpelah's cave, he set his heart at rest, feeling for himself no further worldly concern.

The sun has shone upon his head at length, but not till it was covered with gray hairs.

He has found his Joseph again, and even embraced *his* sons; but not till the hands are reduced to do the office of the eyes. He walks down the steep of life in tranquillity, but his limbs tremble under him, and he fast arrives at that point to which the sorrows and joys of life equally tend, in which all events of whatever complexion, must finally issue.

Feeling in himself the approach of dissolution, and warned by that spirit who had been his comforter in all his tribulations, he ummons his children to his presence, and, with

a mixture of paternal tenderness and severity, anxiety and confidence, administers his last dying counsels.

His work is done; nature can do no more; the voice fails, the limbs contract, the breath departs, the artery beats no more; the heart of Jacob is at length at rest.

His life of one hundred and forty-seven years is ended; of which not above a ninth part of it passed in any tolerable degree of peace and comfort, and that portion of it at a period when the heart has scarcely any taste of pleasure at all.

Slowly and sadly they bore him to his last resting place, in Canaan; but why should they mourn the good man's pilgrimage ended, which he had long since pronounced "*Evil*" indeed.

Few men have experienced greater varieties, greater reverses of condition than the patriarch, Jacob. But we find him perpetually gathering strength from the hardships which he endured, supporting a life of uninterrupted, unutterable affliction with patience and fortitude, suffering and feeling as a man, but enduring and overcoming as a saint, and at length closing the extended scene of woe with the triumph of a believer exulting in the bright, unclouded prospects of immortality.

CHAPTER V.

Joseph.

HIS DREAMS; SOLD BY HIS BRETHREN; IMPRISONED IN EGYPT; HIS FINAL PROMOTION; MAKES HIMSELF KNOWN TO HIS BRETHREN; SENDS FOR HIS FATHER; DEATH AT AN ADVANCED AGE.

AFTER the statement of the single circumstance of his birth, we hear nothing more of Joseph, until he attained his seventeenth year, when the sacred historian introduces him to us with wonderful art and skill.

From the very first moment we become interested in him. He is the son of beauteous Rachel, who had long since

pillowed her head in the grave,—and the darling object of his father's affections.

One of the earliest things related of him is his recital of significant dreams to his brethren and to his father, exciting the envy of the former, and incurring the rebuke of the latter. Notwithstanding his parent's reproof, he "observed the sayings," and doubtless considered the doubling of the vision, and its coinciding purport, as portending something great and good for his beloved child, though imagination conceived not its rapid conclusion, or the extraordinary means which would be used for its accomplishment.

The sons of Jacob, tending their flocks at a distance, prolonged their absence to such an extent, as to excite the apprehensions of a loving parent. Anxious to know of their welfare, he sent Joseph on the kindly errand of inquiry. Our tender interest is now strongly excited for the hapless youth. A lad of seventeen, who had never till now been from beneath the protection of paternal care and tenderness; whose face "the wind of heaven" had never hitherto "visited too roughly;" whose spirit mortification had never galled; whose heart affliction had never yet pierced,—thrown at once into the wide world, missing his way in an unknown country, exposed to varied danger; coming at length to the place of his destination, but disappointed of finding what he looked for there; and finally, falling into the hands of cruel, merciless men, where he expected loving brothers. He comes to them with words of peace, with kind and affectionate inquiries after their health and prosperity. They meet him with looks of aversion, with words of contempt and hatred, with thoughts of blood.

The trifling incident of the dreams lies rankling in their bosoms. "Behold," say they, "this *dreamer* cometh."

How different the reception from what he fondly expected! They stript him of his coat,—the gift of his father,—and rudely cast him into a pit, with no other prospect before him but a lingering death.

What must this have been to a heart like Joseph's, tremblingly alive to the keenest sensations of pain; acquainted,

till then, only with gentleness and indulgence, and now dreadfully awakened to perceive the full extent of his misery?

Providential deliverance, however, was at hand.

It was so ordered of heaven, that a traveling company or caravan of Ishmaelitish merchants passed by, in the course of their traffic to Egypt.

A thought occurred to Judah, whose heart began somewhat to relent, that an opportunity offered of ridding themselves of their hated rival, without incurring the guilt of shedding his blood, and that was to sell him as a slave. No sooner was this proposal made, than it was assented to, and they quieted their consciences that no voice would ever come from the distant land to tell the tale of their fearful wrongs.

The hard-hearted band go back to their father's house, and witness the hopeless anguish of a parent, without giving him one ray of hope that he yet lived, or consolation of any sort to mitigate his sorrow, and he saw no alternative,—the mutilated garment of his son bespoke him the victim of violence, and he was dead. As such he mourned him.

Joseph meanwhile lives and prospers in a strange land. He is indeed from under the shadow of his father's wing, but the protection of heaven is not withdrawn.

With true magnanimity of spirit, he cheerfully accommodates his mind to his situation, and without murmur or reluctance, addresses himself to the discharge of his duties as a diligent and faithful servant.

Never did Potiphar make so fortunate a purchase as when he obtained this excellent youth.

The blessing of God enters his house from the moment he becomes a member of his family.

"He made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand."

A false accusation of Potiphar's wife, however, soon deprived him of this position, and gave him a home within prison walls.

Among his fellow-prisoners were two of the chief officers of the king of Egypt, who had fallen under their master's

displeasure, and had been some time in confinement, uncertain of their doom.

The same night they had dreams of strange and inconceivable import to themselves, which greatly saddened their hearts. Joseph attending them in the morning, observed the deep concern which was engraved on their countenances; and sympathy being always one of the native effusions of an honest heart, he kindly inquires into the cause of it. From the different complexion of their dreams, and inspired, no doubt, by wisdom from above, he predicts their approaching doom: the speedy restoration of the one to his former trust and dignity; a sudden and ignominous death to the other.

Nothing but inspiration could have borne Joseph through a declaration so bold and decisive, and which was to be brought to the awful test of confirmation or disappointment in so short a space as three days.

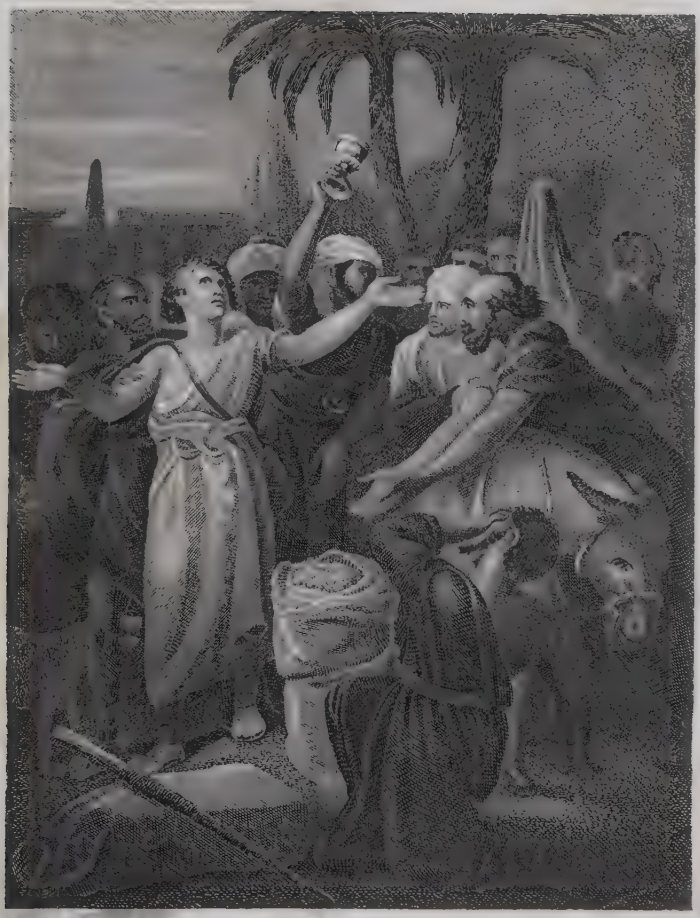
Inexpressibly tender and pathetic was his appeal to the one for whom he pictured prosperity: "Think on me when it shall be well with thee." The happy day of release came, but the freed one, intent upon his own pleasure, forgot his fellow-prisoner, and for two long years remembered him not. Then the mighty sovereign of Egypt was troubled with vision upon vision, to which proud magicians and boasting soothsayers could affix no meaning, or guess at any interpretation.

Then it is the ungrateful recipient of Joseph's favors bethinks himself of his fault, and speaks of his peculiar wisdom to Pharaoh.

He was called from his obscurity, and stood before the proud court, with the confidence which unaffected goodness always inspires, and calmly unfolded the meaning and import of the king's dreams.

Henceforth his course of life must change,—the humble prisoner becomes the prominent ruler.

At this time Joseph was but thirty years old, seventeen of which he had passed under the eye of a fond, indulgent father, and the other thirteen, at that period of life when the heart is most devoted to pleasure, he had lingered away in all



THE CUP FOUND IN BENJAMIN'S SACK

the variety of human wretchedness; but in all the dignity of virtue, all the superiority of wisdom, all the delights, pure and sublime, of true piety. And now, at an age when most men are only beginning to reflect and act as reasonable beings, we see him raised, not by accident, or petulance, but by undisputed merit, to a situation which one part of mankind look up to with desire, another with awe, and a third with despair.

"See him exalted to the right hand of Pharaoh, made lord over all Egypt, the lives, the conduct, the liberties, the property of millions entrusted to his care, subjected to his authority.

Behold him married to a princess, arrayed in vestures of fine linen, a gold chain about his neck, the royal signet in his hands, riding through the land in the second chariot, while admiring nations bow the knee before him.

At this period, news of plenty in Egypt reached the land of Canaan, which brought the ten sons of Jacob thither to buy corn for their starving families.

"The position of Joseph, the change thirteen years had wrought in his appearance, effectually disguised him from their knowledge, and as they came into his presence, the ten proud spirits fell at the feet of their unknown brother."

Behold now the dream which boyish vanity, *perhaps*, at first suggested, which fraternal jealousy so keenly reprobated, and so sternly avenged, which a father's wisdom was constrained to check and reprove, and which incredulity, no doubt, would treat as the idle chimera of a disturbed imagination, verified and brought to pass.

A single glance was sufficient for Joseph's recognition of them, and the indifferent treatment he assumed toward them ill accorded with the gushing emotions of his heart.

It excited in them recollections of the past, and drew forth an expression of their mutual guilt, which so touched the heart of the exalted brother, that he was forced to retire to conceal his feelings. Having regained his composure he renewed his inquiries, and dismissed them, retaining one as a pledge that they would bring with them another time, the only remaining one—the youthful Benjamin.

As time passed on, their second arrival was announced to Joseph, and as he entered their presence, the sight of the loved countenance of his brother Benjamin awakened so many tender associations, he was obliged again to retire, to conceal the overpowering emotions of his heart. He returned and inquired kindly of their father's health; provided for them a feast, and eventually, to their no small astonishment, made the disclosure to them that he *was really Joseph;* at the same time assuring them of favor, bidding them think more of the merciful interposition of God in bringing him to his present position, than of their own unnatural conduct.

What a triumph was Joseph's! What a glorious superiority!

Such is the exalted nature of true goodness,—not satisfied with merely bestowing forgiveness, it strives to close the wounds which guilt has made.

Joseph having discovered himself to his brethren, is as eager to hasten their departure, as he was before artful to detain them; for his heart yearned to meet again his aged father. He dismisses them, provided with every accommodation for the safe and comfortable removal of his honored parent, and their tender children, for whom he generously promises to provide all things necessary for their comfort.

As they neared the land, Joseph made ready his chariot, and hastened to meet them, and who can describe that meeting between father and son? Who can tell how much of bliss was concentrated in those few brief moments? They silently wept, and *tearful silence* best befits the occasion.

With filial tenderness Joseph watched over his father, and for seventeen years the days of the patriarch were gladdened by the grateful attentions of a dutiful son.

At the expiration of that time he saw his aged parent close his eyes in death, and in accordance with his request, he followed his remains to the land of Canaan, to sleep beside his kindred. Having deposited his sacred pledge in the cave of the field of Macpelah, Joseph with all his retinue returned to the land of Egypt. This transpired in the fifty-sixth year of his age. The history of the remainder, con-

taining a period of fifty-four years more, shrinks into a few short sentences. But they exhibit a beautiful and instructive picture of a generous spirit, of great and growing domestic happiness, of a capacious prophetic soul, and of a faithful, obedient, and believing heart.

As Joseph became conscious that his days were rapidly declining, he said unto his brethren, "I die;" and as his dying father held him engaged by a solemn oath not to bury him but in Canaan, so he binds his posterity by a similar obligation, to carry his remains, when opportunity offered, to the sacred spot where the sleeping dust of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob reposed.

Accordingly, the dead body of Joseph becomes no inconsiderable object in the history of Israel, from this time forward, to their final establishment in Canaan.

With much pomp it was embalmed; with much care preserved in their deepest distresses and afflictions; in all their wanderings it accompanied them, and never, till they rested in the peaceable possession of the land of promise, did it rest in the peaceful tomb.

Thus lived, and died, Joseph the son of Jacob.

A man whom all nations, and every description of mankind, have united to praise and admire; whose character and fortunes the pen of inspiration has vouchsafed to delineate with singular accuracy, and with uncommon strength of coloring. Who, in every stage of life, in youth, in manhood, and even to old age, interests, instructs and delights every reader of taste, virtue, and sensibility. Who in adversity preserved inflexible constancy; and in elevation next to royalty, adorned his high station by unaffected simplicity, incorruptible integrity, native, unassuming dignity, fervent piety, invariable moderation, and uniform modesty and humility. Who, as a son, a brother, a servant, a father, a master, a ruler, is equally amiable and praiseworthy. Who, to the sagacity of the statesman, added the penetration of the prophet, the firmness of the believer, and the purity of the saint.

Who, by the blessing of Providence, was saved through

dangers the most threatening, to pity, to forgive, and to preserve those who meant to have destroyed him; and who, in a word, was miraculously raised up of God from an obscure nation, to be an instrument of much temporal good to nations; to mature and execute the plans of eternal wisdom, and to typify to a dark age, Him who is fairer than the children of men, and through whom all the blessings of nature, of providence, and of redemption are communicated to mankind.

CHAPTER VI.

Joshua.

THE ANCESTRY OF JOSHUA; HIS QUALIFICATIONS TO BE A LEADER OF THE PEOPLE; COMMANDING THE SUN TO STAND STILL; SUCCESS IN OVERCOMING HIS ENEMIES.

JOSHUA, the son of Nun, of the tribe of Ephraim, was first called Oshea, or Hoshea, which signifies saved, a saviour, or salvation; but afterward Moses, guided no doubt by a prophetic spirit, changed his name into Yehoshua, or Joshua, which signifies *he shall save*, or the salvation of Jehovah; referring no doubt to his being God's instrument in saving the people from the hands of their enemies, and leading them from victory to victory, over the different Canaanitish nations, till he put them in possession of the promised land.

Joshua was denominated the *servant of Moses*, as he seems to have acted sometimes as his *secretary*, sometimes as his aid-de-camp, and sometimes as the general of the army. He was early appointed to be the *successor* of Moses, and under the instruction of this great master he was fully qualified for the important office.

He was a great and pious man, and God honored him in a most extraordinary manner, as the sequel of the history amply proves.

From preceding history it appears that he became attached

to Moses shortly after the exodus from Egypt; that he was held by him in the highest esteem; had the command of the army confided to him in the war with the Amalekites; and accompanied his master to the Mount, when he went up to receive the Law from God. These were the highest honors he could possibly receive during the life-time of Moses.

After the death of Moses, God's *Prime Minister*, Joshua was commissioned to bring the people into the promised land; and with the promise of the ever-abiding presence of the Lord, he betook himself to the work.

He immediately sent spies to examine into the state of the inhabitants of the land, and bringing a favorable report, they pressed forward; the waters of the Jordan parting to give them a safe passage through.

They left there a standing memorial of the event, and went on, with new confidence in their *earthly leader*, and new devotion to their *heavenly Captain*.

The time of close conflict with their enemies came. Joshua saw that the enemies of his people were put to flight, yet he well knew that all which escaped would rally again, and that he should be obliged to meet them once more in the field of battle if permitted now to escape; finding that the day was drawing toward a close, he feared that he should not have time sufficient to complete the destruction of the confederate armies; in this moment, being suddenly inspired with Divine confidence, he requested the Lord to perform the most stupendous miracle that had ever been wrought, which was no less than to *arrest the sun in his course*, and prolong the day till the destruction of his enemies had been completed! It was done. Victory was gained; and Joshua went on, strong in the Lord, conquering and to conquer, till the nations were subdued before him, and the fair inheritance won!

The land duly apportioned, Joshua gathers together the tribes; recapitulates to them the gracious dealings of the Lord, exhorts them to be faithful; and then the sacred historian gives us this brief record; "And it came to pass after

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these things, that Joshua the son of Nun, the *servant of the Lord*, died, being a hundred and ten years old."

His work was done; his soul ripened for a state of blessedness, and God took him to himself. *Enviable distinction.*

"*Servant of the Lord;*" who would aspire to greater honor?

It does not appear that Joshua was ever married, or that he had any children. That he was high in the estimation of God, we learn from his being chosen to succeed Moses in the government of the people.

He was the person alone, of all the host of Israel, who was deemed every way qualified to go out before the congregation, and go in; to lead them out, and bring them in; and be the shepherd of the people, because the spirit of God was in him.

He was of all men of that generation, next in eminence to the great legislator, Moses.

Like his great master, he neither provided for himself nor his relatives; though he had it constantly in power so to do. He was the head and leader of the people; the chief and foremost in all fatigues and dangers; without whose piety, prudence, wisdom and military skill, the whole tribes of Israel, humanly speaking, must have been ruined. And yet this conquerer of the nations did not reserve to himself a goodly inheritance, a noble city, nor any part of the spoils of those he had vanquished. His countrymen, it is true, gave him an inheritance among them. This we might suppose, was in consideration of his eminent services, and this, we might naturally expect, would be the best in the land!

No! They gave him Timnath-serah, in the barren mountains of Ephraim, and even this he *asked.*

But was not this the best *city* in the land? No; it was even no city; evidently no more than the ruins of one that had stood in that place; and hence it is said, *he builded the city, and dwelt therein;* he, with some persons of his own tribe, revived the stones out of the rubbish, and made it habitable.

Joshua believed there was a God; he loved him, acted under his influence, and endeavored to the utmost of his power

to promote the glory of his Maker, and the welfare of man and he expected his recompense in another world.

Like him of whom he was an illustrious *type*, he led a painful and laborious life, devoting himself entirely to the service of God and the public good.

How unlike was Joshua to those men who, for certain services, get elevated to the highest honors; but not content with the recompense thus awarded them by their country, use their new influence for the further aggrandizement of themselves and dependents, at the expense, and often to the ruin of their country!

Joshua retires only from labor when there is no more work to be done, and no more dangers to be encountered.

He was the first in the field, and the last out of it; and never attempted to take rest till all the tribes of Israel had got their possessions, and were settled in their inheritances! Of him it might be truly said, as of Cæsar, he continued to work, for he "considered nothing done, while anything remained undone."

Behold this man retiring from office and from life, without any kind of emolument! the greatest man of all the tribes of Israel; the most patriotic, and the most serviceable; and yet the worst provided for!

Statesmen! naval and *military commanders!* look Joshua in the face, read his history, and learn from it the glory of true *patriotism!*

That man alone who truly fears and loves God, credits his revelation, and is made a partaker of his spirit, is capable of performing *disinterested* services to his country and to mankind.

CHAPTER VII.

Samuel.

EARLY CONSECRATION TO THE LORD; REMARKABLE CALL TO THE PROPHETIC OFFICE; CHOSEN JUDGE; ANOINTS SAUL AND AFTERWARD DAVID; HIS DEATH AND SUPPOSED AGE.

SAMUEL was one of the most eminent of the Jewish prophets, and was the *last*, and indeed the *greatest* of the judges of Israel.

We have but little more than the outlines of his character, yet wherever his conduct is manifested it exhibits a life regulated by the purest principles of virtue and integrity.

The signification of his name, (*lent of the Lord,*) shows his early and peculiar designation for a sacred work, and the propriety of maternal consecration in bringing him at the earliest period to the holy service of the temple.

It is an interesting and touching picture to see that glad mother leading her son to the venerable priest, Eli, and leaving him as a choice offering to the Lord.

She returned home; still, however, to maintain a watchful solicitude for her son, and as often as the yearly sacrifice came round, she repaired to the temple with some token of love for her child. The age of Samuel at the time he was brought to the temple is not certainly known. Some think it to be *seven*, others *twelve*, though the former is more generally approved.

His immediate duty there seems to have been in rendering such little services as his age allowed about the person of the High Priest; and eventually in some of the lighter services of the tabernacle.

For a time the only thing said of him, is comprehended in the sentence, that "he grew on, and was in favor both with the Lord, and also with men." High distinction! glorious recommendation! who would seek for more!

He was early introduced to the prophetic office, and in a very remarkable manner.

It seems the attachment of the aged priest had kept Samuel near him at night as well as during the day.

One night his youthful slumbers were broken by a voice which pronounced his name. With prompt attention the lad started from his couch, and hastened to the bedside of his aged lord, who, he supposed, had called him.

This he repeated three times, for so often was he called, and each time supposed that Eli had called him.

The strangeness of the circumstance led the high priest to think there was something more than human in it; and directed him to go and lie down once more, and if again called, to say, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth."

Samuel did as he was directed, and the Divine voice then declared the terrible judgments which should speedily fall upon Eli and his house; upon his sons because they had "made themselves vile," and upon him because he "restrained them not."

The reluctance of Samuel to afflict the spirit of his venerable lord kept him silent, till by a solemn adjuration he was constrained to let him know all that had passed.

He withheld nothing of Jehovah's denunciations, but told the whole of the Divine communication, as it had been revealed to him.

After the account of this remarkable judgment upon Eli and his house, the sacred historian carries forward the history of Samuel to another point. The death of the high priest made the people desirous of a judge, and there was no one in Israel who stood before the people with any claims to attention comparable to those of Samuel.

His constant presence at the tabernacle, had made the Israelites familiar with his person and history from childhood; and convinced that their best course to prosperity and health would be secured by placing themselves under the guidance of a man so wise and holy as Samuel, he was formally recognized by them as their *judge*, although most of the

essential functions of that office had already come insensibly into his hands, and been exercised by him.

His first act was to extirpate idolatry; and he hesitated not to promise the people that at this cost God would not fail to deliver them from the yoke of the Philistines.

He then called an assembly of the people at Mizpeh, on the borders of Judah and Benjamin, to engage with him in a solemn act of prayer and humiliation before the Lord, as a suitable commencement of a new and more prosperous career. Wise determination! How unlike the counsels of the world.

The next act, as we may well suppose, is to raise a monument commemorative of the Lord's goodness to them.

As Samuel advanced in years he appointed his sons judges; but failing to walk in the right way, the people were dissatisfied, and became clamorous for a king.

Notwithstanding the remonstrance of their judge, and his advice to the contrary, they still persisted, until Samuel sorrowfully dismissed them to their homes, (they having gathered together at Ramah,) that he might have time to take the necessary measures for effecting this great change. As usual, he had recourse to Divine aid, and in obedience to the word of the Lord, annointed them a king according to their desire.

At a subsequent assemblage of the people, he testified of his own integrity to them; spoke of the dealings of God with them, and exhorted them to future obedience.

Saul proving unfaithful to his trust, Samuel deserted him, and never more acknowledged him king.

He "Mourned for him," and continued to perform his prophetic functions at Ramah and at Naioth, superintending the school of the prophets in that place.

He was afterward sent to annoint the son of Jesse *king;* and then with the characteristic brevity of the sacred writers, it is said that "Samuel died."

The estimation in which he was held, is shown by the simple sentence,—"the Israelites were gathered together and lamented him."

He is supposed to have lived about one hundred years. Supposing this to be so, he filled the office of judge sixty years, as he was about forty years of age at the commencement of his reign.

A prime minister, deeply devoted to God, and faithful to his king, and to his country, is so rare a character in the world, that when he does occur, he should be held up to public admiration. There scarcely seems a parallel for Samuel.

If there was ever a heaven-born minister, it was he. In his public and private conduct there was no blemish. He gave a bright example of zeal, diligence, inflexible integrity, and uncorruptedness.

He reproved both the people and their king for transgressions, with a boldness which nothing but a sense of the Divine *authority* could inspire; and yet he tempered it with a sweetness which showed the interest he felt in their welfare, and the deep and distressing concern he felt for their backslidings and infidelities.

He reformed many abuses in the Jewish state, and raised it to a pitch of political consequence to which it had long been a stranger. He was very zealous for the honor of God, and supported the rights of pure religion, of the king, and of the people, against all encroachments.

He is supposed to have been the first who established *academies*, or *schools for prophets;* at least, we do not hear of them before his time; and it is granted that they continued till the Babylonish captivity.

This was a wise institution, and no doubt contributed much to the maintenance of pure religion, and the prevention of idolatry among the people.

He sought not to make his office subservient to his own pecuniary advantage. He was among the Hebrews what Aristides is said to have been among the Greeks,—so poor at his death, though a *minister of state*, that he did not leave property enough to bury him.

Justice was by him duly and impartially administered, and oppression and wrong had no existence.

Let those in like position, who have sought their own glory, fall down at the feet of this *heaven-born* man, and learn from this immaculate judge of Israel, what an incorruptible *minister* of state means.

How seldom in the annals of the world, from the assembled heads of the great body politic, can the departing *prime minister* hear, "Thou hast not defrauded us; thou hast not oppressed us; neither hast thou taken aught of any man's hand!"

This voice can be heard from Gilgal; but of what other minister can this be spoken but of *Samuel the Seer*, who was the gift of God's mercy to the people of Israel; whose memory was too precious to be intrusted to public monuments, but stands, and alas! almost *unique* in the *Book of God.*

CHAPTER VIII.

David.

FIRST APPEARANCE IN PUBLIC LIFE; SENT TO HIS BROTHERS; DESTROYS GOLIATH; SIN AND SORROW; NUMBERS THE PEOPLE, AND THEREBY INCURS GOD'S DISPLEASURE; GENIUS AS A POET; CHARACTER AS A MAN OF GOD.

PRIOR to the appearance of David on the occasion of his being anointed by Samuel, at Behlehem, nothing is distinctly stated of his history and character.

There are, however, a few retrospective intimations regarding his youthful life, and some materials left in his divine songs, from which some particulars may be gleaned.

Singled out from all the sons of Jesse as one particularly calculated to be the ruler of the people, by the disposition of appropriate graces from God's own hand, he at once comes into public notice, and his history afterward recorded more at length, than any other one in the Old Testament.

The rare combination in him of all that was gentle, tender,

and mild,—with the most exalted enthusiasm, the most noble aspirations, the most generous sentiments, the most manly deportment, the most heroic daring, and the most invincible prowess,—joined to his invariable consideration for others, his open heartedness, his humbleness, and the entire absence of all pretension in him, excited the admiration of the people. He was known to be a man of God, and to be much in communion with him—and this diffused an ineffable grace over his demeanor and conversation, to which beyond question, much of the extraordinary influence he possessed over the minds and hearts of others must be ascribed.

To these personal qualities, David added all the accomplishments of his age and country. His age was not one of scholarship or books. Yet such scholarship as was valued among his countrymen, he possessed—and the books that were found among them, he well knew. Above all, he had deeply studied such parts of the Sacred Scripture as then existed. His writings continually evince his close acquaintance with it—his admiration of it—his intense appreciation of its value—his *love* for it. This shows that he had attained the same state of grace, had been subject to the same teachings of the Divine Spirit, by which all true, that is, all vital, spiritual knowledge must be imparted—as we are bound to realize under a more perfect system, and with more ample materials, and broader revelations.

There has been but one Spirit from the beginning; and David was taught of him.

Thus early in life was he distinguished as the "*man after God's own heart.*"

The first record we have of him, after his designation for the kingly office, is his appearance before the king, to soothe his unhappy mind by the irresistible charms of music.

He succeeds, and returns again to his father's house, and his wonted employment as a shepherd; but again we see him traversing the road from Bethlehem, bent on a kindly errand to his brothers, who were in the war against the Philistines. It was there he met the proud Goliath, and his taunting words to the hosts of Israel.

It was with burning indignation he beheld the gigantic pagan stand forth, and "defy the armies of the living God;" and strong in the strength of the *Mighty One*, he dared to meet the foe.

With his *shepherd's sling*, and "*five smooth stones*," he marched on with undaunted courage, fully conscious it was the Lord's cause, and must eventually triumph.

With a single stone he brings the vast form of the boasting giant to the ground, and displaying the head of their leader to the discomfited Philistines, they fled.

David at once becomes a public man. There is no more obscurity—no more sweet solitude of private life—no more feeding of sheep, for him. If we look to the deep depression into which the Israelites had fallen, so that the most daring spirits, under the stimulus of the highest rewards, had not ventured upon the enterprise which the son of Jesse had so nobly and piously achieved, we may form some notion of the admiration and gratitude with which this exploit was regarded, and the enthusiasm which it excited.

It was the one great act by which some men are enabled, in one little hour,—or even in the time of a passing thought,—to illustrate and adorn their whole career, presenting to the public view one illustrious deed, the memory of which becomes in every mind inseparably connected with their name, and goes down with it to future ages.

It was impossible for any Israelite thenceforward in David's lifetime to behold him, or in the ages to come to think of him, without remembering this great exploit, with its antecedents and its consequences.

From this time an intimate friendship sprung up between David and Jonathan, which remained true and firm through all the jealousy of Saul, and attempts to take life, which immediately followed.

From the moment it was sounded in the streets, "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands," the heart of the king had feared the consequences of his rival's celebrity, and he determined upon his death. He gave him his daughter to wife,—but why? That he might better accomplish his malicious purposes!

In a variety of ways he endeavored to secure his object, but David was in the hands of God, whose purposes concerning him were not yet fulfilled.

When at length Saul was delivered into his hands, he manifests an admirable spirit in withholding violence, because of the *sacred seal* upon him, which distinguished him as the "*Lord's Anointed.*"

After the death of Saul by his own hand, David, by Divine direction, proceeded to Hebron, where he was again anointed, and made king over Judah.

The commencement of his reign was prosperous; he subdued the Philistines, brought the *ark* back to Jerusalem, amid general rejoicing, concluding with a prayer, in which he himself most devoutly acknowledged God's mercy and goodness.

Thus far David appears great, glorious, and pious; but we have to contemplate him descending from his high position, and becoming involved in crimes of the deepest dye. The unlawful intercourse with Bathsheba, coupled with the murder of Uriah, the innocent husband, under aggravated circumstances, brings a stain upon his character never to be forgotten.

This is a turning point in the history of David. It wrought a change even in the man himself. Broken in spirit by the consciousness of how deeply he had sinned against God and against man; humbled in the eyes of his subjects, and his influence with them weakened by the knowledge of his crimes; and even his authority in his own household, and his claim to the reverence of his sons, relaxed by his loss of character—David appears henceforth as a much altered man.

He is as one who goes down to the grave mourning. He is still pious, but his piety takes an altered aspect. It is no longer buoyant, exulting, triumphant, glad; it is repressed, humble, patient, contrite, suffering.

His trust in the Lord is not less than it had been, and that trust sustains him, and still gives dignity to his character and sentiments. But even that trust is different.

He sinned deeply; but his penitence was as deep and

extraordinary as his crime; and nothing could surpass both, *but* that eternal mercy that took away the guilt, assuaged the sorrow, and restored this most humble transgressor to character, holiness, happiness and heaven.

This event is supposed to have taken place in the twenty-third year of his reign, and fifty-third of his age.

Once again we find him giving way to a temptation of Satan. Slackening in his piety and confidence toward God, and meditating some extensions of his dominions without the Divine counsel or command, he was naturally curious to know whether the number of fighting men in his empire was sufficient for the work which he projected.

Accordingly he sent forth to number the effective subjects of his realm. His immediate call to a choice between fearful judgments led him to reflection; which was followed by an acknowledgment of his sin, the offering of sacrifice to God, which was accepted, and the plague stayed.

These are indeed spots upon the otherwise blameless life of David. He was subject to human frailty, and therefore not perfect; but where he sinned deeply, his repentance was corresponding.

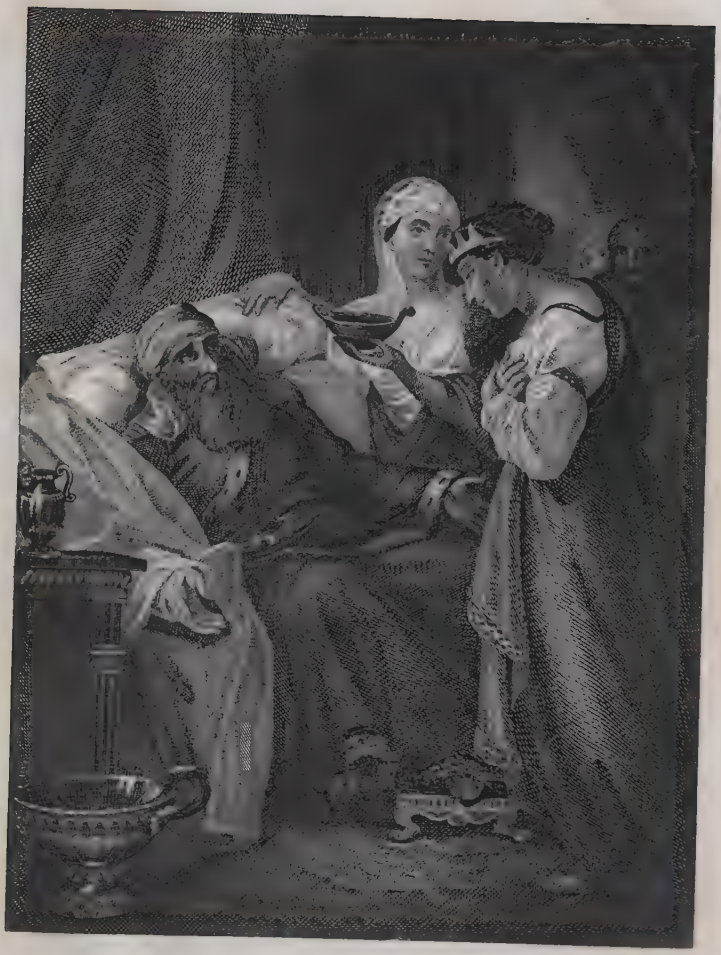
The time drew near when he must close his eyes upon earth, and terminate his mortal existence. Fully conscious of it, he gives his dying charge to Solomon, who was to be his successor; and it is said of him, he "slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David."

He died in the seventieth year of his age, but by reason of his trials and sorrow, is said to have had the appearance of unusual infirmity.

Notwithstanding occasional blemishes, David was a *true believer*, a *zealous adorer of God*, *teacher* of his *law* and *worship*, and inspirer of his praise.

A life so *long*, so holy, so useful, and, except in these instances, so truly exemplary, entitles him to the character of a *holy man of God;* and allowing but a little for the dispensation under which he lived, *one of the holiest*, if not *the* holiest, that ever wore a crown, or wielded a sceptre.

It was utterly impossible that any man could have written



DAVID & BATHSHEBA.

1st Kings. Chap 1st Ver 15. 16

such Psalms as David has, whose soul was not deeply imbued with the spirit of holiness.

Love for the *holy law of God*, is a sign of grace; and he possessed this *love* in the highest degree.

There was a rare union of qualities in his character. He was a consummate and unequaled *hero*, a skillful and fortunate *captain*, a steady *patriot*, a wise *ruler*, a faithful, generous, and magnanimous *friend;* and what is yet rarer, a no less generous and magnanimous *enemy*.

But the highest merit of David, and that which seems to have been almost exclusively *his own*, was his *poetic genius*.

As a Divine poet, even God himself had created none greater, either *before* or *since*. In this science and gift he is therefore the chef-d'œuvre of the Almighty.

Others have given *occasional* specimens of profound poetical genius, but there is no *whole* like that of David.

He has left us elegies, odes, triumphal songs, descriptive pieces, and sacred lyrics, in which every chord of the human heart—every emotion of the soul—every aspiration of the spirit, is touched with a master hand.

So deeply does he sound the depths of man's nature, so loftily does he soar to the gates of light—that no poet has ever lived whose ideas have become so much the common property of nations,—none in whose beautiful words the hopes, the fears, the joys, the griefs of the spiritual man have found such adequate expression.

Men of all nations find in these compositions a language at once suitable to their feelings, and expressive of their highest joys and deepest sorrows, as well as of all the endlessly varied wishes and desires of their hearts.

The *sublimity*, the *depth*, the *excursive fancy*, the discursive power, the vast compass of thought, the knowledge of heaven and earth, of *God* and *nature*, the work of the Spirit, the endlessly varied temptations of Satan, the knowledge of the human heart, the travail of the soul, the immense grasp of thought embodying and arranging, and afterward clothing in suitable language, the vast assemblage of ideas furnished by the natural and spiritual world, are all unrivaled. It is

not the fiction of inventive genius; but the production of truth, hidden before in the bosom of God and nature, and exhibited in the most pleasing colors, with the most impressive pathos, and irresistible harmonic diction; these qualities, —these supra-mundane excellencies, are found in no other poet that ever graced the annals of the world; they exist in their perfection only in David, king of Israel. What is peculiarly remarkable, he has succeeded to the very highest degree in every species of poetic composition that has for its *object* the glory of God, and the welfare of man; and there is not one poet who has succeeded him, that has not failed when he attempted to sing of God, the punishment and rewards of the future world, and the unsearchable riches of Christ.

His heart and his treasure were evidently in heaven, and thither, we trust, he has long since ascended; there to join in a "*nobler, sweeter strain*" than earth could afford,—strains to which the most *exquisite melodies* his harp ever produced, bear not even a faint comparison.

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."

CHAPTER IX.

Elijah.

BIRTH-PLACE; HUMBLE ORIGIN; SUDDEN APPEARANCE ON THE STAGE OF ACTIVE LIFE; PROVIDENTIALLY SUSTAINED AT CHERITH; RESTORES THE DEAD; CALLS ELISHA TO THE PROPHETIC OFFICE; ASCENSION TO HEAVEN.

THE history of this great man is introduced very abruptly. He appears at once upon the stage, *the whole man*, living and moving, in spirit and conduct.

His origin is enveloped in obscurity. He was born among the mountains of Gilead, on the other side

of Jordan. His birth-place, Tishbe, may be considered as only a mean and obscure village in the mountains; and the prophet in his childhood could not have known much of schools, or seats of learning, or the great world. He owed not his greatness to high birth or station, or a native place of renown, but rather to the distinguishing grace of Him who gave him his commission.

The first act of Elijah is to give the fearful announcement to the idolatrous people about him, that *rain* and even *dew* should be withheld from the earth for years. In zeal for the honor of God, he had prayed that it might not rain, and being assured of an answer, he declared the judgment, and it immediately followed. Was the prophet to have no share in the common calamity? The Lord interposed to comfort and rescue him, in a way which should glorify his name, and exercise the faith of Elijah. He bade him depart to the brook Cherith, where by an especial Providence his wants should be supplied. For twelve months he staid in the dreary wild, near the banks of the Jordan, happy, as we may suppose, in obeying the Divine intimation.

At length the flow of the brook began to diminish, and when its waters were well nigh spent, the Lord summoned him from his quiet retreat to a distant city, where he had again made provision for him, at the house of a poor widow.

It is a noble testimony that is here borne of him:—"*he arose and went.*"

Directed by the spirit he came to the appointed place,—the widow's home,—where both were long sustained by the miraculous increase of the scanty store.

Delightful, undoubtedly, was the situation of Elijah and the devout widow at Zarephath. But, unexpectedly a heavy cloud darkens the peaceful cottage. Death comes and claims the *only child* of the widow. In her bereavement she appeals to the prophet, who retires to his room and earnestly implores that life may again be imparted to the inanimate form.

It was granted, and the child restored in such a manner as to give unmistakable proof of the power of God, and authority of his messenger.

Having accomplished the Divine purpose at Zarephath, he receives a third command to show himself unto Ahab, coupled with a cheering promise of rain.

When he had faithfully delivered the message entrusted to him, he makes preparations for a scene which has not its like in sacred history.

The "priests of Baal" and "prophets of the grove" were summoned to Mt. Carmel, where by a public exhibition of power, it was to be decided who was worthy of their homage, the *Infinite God*, or the *idol Baal*. From morning till evening the cry of the idolators pierced the leaden ears of their god, but it was unavailing.

Then Elijah stood forth in simplicity and uprightness, with tranquil countenance and firm deportment, and called upon the God of heaven. Mysterious moment!

The whole revelation of God is at stake. If no answer follows, the whole fabric falls in, and the ground of hope is gone. But the prayer is uttered; the fire descends, and the people fall upon their faces with the involuntary exclamation, "Jehovah, He is the God!"

Another prayer brought abundance of rain upon the thirsty earth, and then the prophet is called away from public activity, to wander once more in the solitudes of the wilderness. The haughty Jezebel threatens his life, and he flees from her. Upon his way he lies under the shadow of a juniper tree, and there his soul longs for rest, and he prays that he may die. But his hour is not yet come.

An angel comes to him, and refreshed and comforted, he goes on his way. Proceeding to Mt. Horeb, he took up his abode in a cave, where in various striking ways, he had bright manifestations of the power and glory of the Almighty. With a three-fold commission he leaves this place, in the execution of which he is to anoint Hazael, for the Syrian throne, and secure the companionship of Elisha in his work.

Jealous for the honor of God, he again improves the occasion, to show an idolatrous king the folly of his ways.

He intercepts the messengers of Ahaziah, and in attesta-

tion of the Divine authority of his mission, causes their destruction. In obedience to God's command he goes himself to the enemy's camp, and repeats to the enraged monarch, the judgments of heaven. The promise of his God, lifts him up as on eagles' wings, above every fear, in his trying duty.

The prophet's work is now well nigh finished, his pilgrimage completed. He knows it by a Divine revelation.

The horses of fire and the flaming chariot stand already prepared behind the clouds to fetch him away; nor has the Lord concealed from him the distinguished manner in which he is to be taken home. He goes then from Gilgal to Bethel to bid a last farewell to his disciples, as to his dear children. He hoped to have made the journey alone, but scarcely had he taken his staff, when Elisha, his faithful friend stands ready to accompany him.

Thrice,—at Gilgal, at Bethel, and at Jericho—did Elijah with increasing importunity, entreat his companion to leave him; but as often did he receive the concise and decided reply,—"as the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee."

Fifty men of the sons of the prophets came to meet the revered man on his way, fully conscious it was the last time a meeting would be allowed on earth.

How gratifying it must have been to him, to hear, from their voices, an echo to his own ardent prayers, which, when his faith was weak, he had supposed to have no counterpart.

Having arrived at the brink of Jordan, Elijah does not tarry there, as if he doubted how he was to pass the river. Folding his mantle together to smite the waters, the stream divided, and they passed safely over.

This formed the last in the chain of wonders which ran through his whole prophetic course; and it serves to show that this man with all his trials and fatigues, held fast, and maintained the beginning of his confidence steadfast unto the end.

The time hastened; he bequeathed to his faithful companion a priceless legacy, and this done, a fiery chariot came down and bore him up to heaven.

Blessed servant of God, thy rest is attained.

CHAPTER X.

Elisha.

HIS PECULIAR MISSION; FIRST MIRACLE, PURIFYING THE WATERS; CONDUCT WITH THE THREE KINGS; RESTORES THE SHUNAMITE'S CHILD FROM THE DEAD; HEALS NAAMAN, THE SYRIAN; HIS FAITHFULNESS UNTO DEATH.

LIKE the quiet, gentle moon, beaming forth consolation and peace, Elisha, son of Shaphat, of Abelmeholah, rose upon the horizon of his people, after the majestic setting of that bright and burning meteor, which in Elijah's person had shone over Israel.

Many have thought they beheld in him but a weak copy of his far greater predecessor, and feel inclined to maintain that his life bears that relation to the Tishbite's, which a dying echo bears to the full original sound, or which a studied and artificial variation bears to the simple theme; simple—yet in its simplicity infinitely more sublime, grand and effective.

Yet this view of the subject reveals any thing but a clear spirit of perception.

A deeper glance leads to a very different conclusion.

If Elijah was an original phenomenon, Elisha was not less so.

There was an essential difference between Elisha's mission and that of his majestic predecessor, and with this his peculiar destination, the man's whole intellectual organization, as well as the manner in which he appeared, and acted upon the scene, stands in the fairest harmony.

He was ordained to appear in Israel as an evangelist, as one of those messengers whose feet "are beautiful on the mountain." As the herald of Divine condescension, he was to lead the people with persuasion into the paternal arms of the Lord, to bind up those hearts which his stern precursor had crushed with the hammer of the law, and startled from

the death-bed of a prolonged and fearful security, with the thunder of his terrible and mighty deeds.

For this mild vocation he had long before been, not only Divinely called, but also imperceptibly educated and prepared by the Lord. All his spiritual endowments had been calculated for this end; nay, more, his outward life, from his youth up, with its innumerable, apparently accidental, apparently unimportant circumstances, had been constrained, although without his consciousness, to be subservient to his future ministerial position.

His heart, like a harp, had been early tuned to soft accords. It was destined to sound songs of love, not the stormy tones of zeal. He grew up under circumstances especially favorable to the tenderer emotions of the soul.

Amid a blossoming, calm, and peaceful landscape, and in the narrow yet familiar confines of a quiet rural life, he, for many a year, experienced no intellectual influence, except that which, with the blue heaven and the green field, the mild sunshine of hallowed maternal love, and the plain, unvarnished piety of a faithful father, exercised over him.

His whole appearance, on reaching manhood, stood in the fairest and most perfect harmony with his peculiar mission. His exterior had nothing terrifying, nothing painfully imposing, nothing oppressive.

The most diffident felt undisturbed and at ease in his presence.

His course is marked by various and stupendous miracles. His first act appears as a characteristic symbol of his whole career. He is in Jericho.

The inhabitants, satisfied of his miraculous endowments, come to him for a great blessing. Their city was beautiful for situation, encompassed with an evergreen wreath of palm groves and perfumed gardens of balm, yet the wells of water were as if poisoned, and the manifold misery which ensued, rendered it almost an object of regret that the city was rebuilt. Elisha hears the recital, and calmly says, "bring me a new cruise, and put salt therein." Then in company with those who made the appeal, he goes to the impure foun-

tain of waters, and taking the vessel in his right hand, without any pompous, formal introduction, shakes its contents into the bubbling waters, calling aloud, with a distinct voice, "thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence, any more death or barren land."

Behold, how faithfully Elisha watches over the interests of his Master! How carefully he seeks that all the glory may be awarded to Him to whom it exclusively belongs,—that not even a ray thereof may cleave to his hands, or to the outward instrument as such.

The words have scarcely left his lips, when already they have exerted their miraculous power, and healing streams issue forth, to spread life and health whithersoever they flow.

It was after leaving Jericho, and while on his way to Bethel, the memorable scene occurred between him and the band of impious, scoffing youth, which resulted in their signal and utter destruction, being torn in pieces by bears from the wood.

These were instruments of the Divine vengeance upon those who dared mock a holy man of God.

From this scene, the prophet betook himself to the solitudes of Mount Carmel, and having regained his composure, by communion with his God, he proceeded to Samaria.

When he reached that city, the united armies of Israel were upon the point of marching out against Moab. Three kings banded together in the enterprise, desire to know of its feasibility and ultimate success. Being informed of Elisha, they repair to him, and as he sees his lofty visitors approaching, he exclaims to the proud king of Israel, "what have I to do with thee? Get thee to the prophets of thy father, and to the prophets of thy mother."

He had spurned Jehovah and his prophets in days of prosperity, and he was conscious now his condescension was owing to his selfish interest and ambition.

Respect, however, for the king of Judah, led him to regard their cause, and he called for a "minstrel."

The sweet tones still the storm of passion within the prophet's breast, and his soul is able to soar again, unhindered, upon the pinions of those sweet melodies, up into the

blissful presence of Jehovah. At this moment the Infinite bends, with the voice of revelation, to his seer, and he speaks cheering words to waiting kings, thus convincing them of his divine mission and inspiration.

The war with Moab ended, Elisha leaves its scenes, and again walks, aiding and healing, among the humble and needy of the people.

He meets with a poor widow, overwhelmed with embarrassments, unable to satisfy the demands of her hard-hearted creditors. Touched with compassion, he dries her tears, by the performance of a miracle, which enabled her to cancel her obligations, and retain some provision for herself.

Next he appears a grateful guest in the cottage at Shunem. Grateful for the kind attentions shown him there, he wished to bestow a particular favor, and accordingly cheered them with the promise of a son.

Time passes on till this child becomes a youth, the hope and joy of his parents, the fairest star in the cloudless sky of their household.

On a summer's morning he is brought to his mother, the victim of disease, and at noon lies a corpse in her arms. The bright star is extinct, the sweet flower has faded, and with it, in an instant, all the pleasant spring-time in the house at Shunem.

The sorely tried mourner hastens to the holy seer, and importunes him to accompany her, and yielding to her entreaties, he goes to the chamber of death, and by power delegated to him from above, restores the child, *living* and *breathing*, to the arms of a joyful parent.

Pausing not in his labors of love, he goes to Gilgal, and there provides an antidote for poison that saves many people from death, and also supplies a famishing multitude with food, from a surprisingly scanty store.

His fame continued to spread abroad. An Israelitish maiden carried to Syria the tale of his deeds, and looking upon her leprous master, she exclaimed, "would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy." The journey was speedily

undertaken, and Naaman the Syrian at length stands before the prophet. What thrilling wonders shall usher in the scene? None! The simple message, "go, wash in Jordan seven times," is all that greets his eye or ear. For a time he is wroth, but finally bathes his diseased body in the soothing waters, and is made whole. Then did he acknowledge Israel's God, and returning to Elisha's cottage, the prophet advances to meet him with a friendly greeting and congratulation. What heavenly streams of hallowed love and rapture here flow together from Naaman's heart and from Elisha's. The prophet worked not for earthly reward, and therefore refused the proffered gift in return.

The Lord sustains his people, and afterward, when the Syrians would have taken Elisha, the Lord smote them with blindness, and thus delivered his servant from their power. We soon see him, with his usual spirit of love, predicting peace and plenty to the beseiged inhabitants of Samaria.

Words of comfort and consolation ever seemed to flow spontaneously from his heart. *Love* was the grand seal stamped upon his mission, and with a sweet halo it clothed his whole prophetic ministry.

He continued his prophetic labors to the last, intent upon his Master's will in his last sickness. Having accomplished it, it is simply said of him, "and Elisha died, and was buried."

His character needs no eulogy. It speaks for itself. It was a life by God approved and blessed, and his reward is sure as *heaven*, and lasting as *immortality*.

CHAPTER XI.

Job.

JOB'S EXISTENCE DOUBTED; NOTED FOR WISDOM, WEALTH, AND PIETY; DEPRIVATION OF ALL EARTHLY POSSESSIONS; SMITTEN WITH GRIEVOUS DISEASE; PERFECT SUBMISSION; FINAL RESTORATION OF HIS HOPES AND JOYS; REFLECTIONS ON THE BOOK OF JOB.

THERE are writers, and not a few, who seem disposed to regard this character of sacred history as a mere creation of genius, produced to subserve the purpose of a writer, whose design was, indeed, the inculcation of important truth, yet who found not in any phase of actual life a sufficiently elevated standard for his purpose.

We are, however, inclined to receive the unqualified declaration of the inspired penman, that "there was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job."

Instead, therefore, of considering him an ideal being, invested with certain feelings and attributes, drawn only from imagination, we have him at once presented to us as a living, actual being, and in a manner so interesting and engaging, that we are constrained at the very outset, to award to him a character of surpassing excellence, and singular integrity.

Eminent for his wisdom, wealth and piety, he is acknowledged to be the "greatest of all the men of the East," and attracts signal admiration by his rare preservation of pious virtues amid a scene of almost unexampled prosperity, as well as heroic fortitude under the most melancholy reverses; which latter circumstance not only obtained for him transient fame, but rendered him to all coming generations, a bright example of christian patience and resignation under accumulated sorrows.

The sacred historian at once introduces us to his Eastern home, surrounded by affluence, and gladdened by the presence of sons and daughters; thus leaving imagination to

draw a grateful picture of domestic and social happiness, which their loving intercourse between themselves seems to justify.

Job had large possessions; flocks and herds numbered by thousands, and a numerous retinue of servants at his command to minister to his pleasure, and promote his advantage. He seems, however, to have been far from giving himself up to the sole enjoyment of sensual gratification, and a life of luxurious ease, but betrays aims and aspirations higher and nobler than the accumulation of earthly treasures, or their mere enjoyment.

The first occasion of his action given us, shows the prevailing sentiments of his heart,—a high regard for the best interests of others, with a holy solicitude for the Divine honor. The frequent festivals that called his children together being ended, he called them to his presence and "sanctified them;" or, as we may suppose, with true parental tenderness and anxiety, affectionately and faithfully counseled them, and then "offered burnt offerings to the number of them all," to atone for the sins they perhaps might have committed.

But the position and character of such a man escapes not the malicious darts of the enemy, and Satan accuses him to God, as a selfish person who serves him only for the hope of secular rewards,—whose conduct, so exemplary, is occasioned by the thought that it will procure for him more abundant prosperity.

Thereupon he receives power to test the purity of his motives, and the strength of his character, restrained, however, from personal attack. Accordingly he goes forth, and while Job was in the midst of bright and prosperous days, with a seemingly cloudless sky above him, and every thing hopeful and promising around him, he suddenly crushes his fondest hopes, and blights his fairest prospects.

Behold him at the arrival of the unexpected messenger, who tells him how the Sabeans have not only taken his cattle, but slain his servants who were with them, he alone escaping to tell him! And see how ere the first feeling of surprise is

over, another and still another comes to proclaim the desolation which fires from heaven and Chaldean bands have made in his vast possessions, depriving him at once not only of his numerous flocks, but his faithful servants.

Surely this were enough for one man to bear, but were this all, it were comparatively light. Scarcely had the last finished his story, when the climax appeared in the astounding intelligence that his family too were destroyed, and one fearful stroke had bereft him of his ten children.

The loss of all worldly goods might be endured; and the sudden change from affluence to penury be tolerable, were the love and sympathy of his children retained. But *all* is gone. Surely, human nature will no longer be able to sustain the crushing weight of sorrow, and will sink irrecoverably beneath it. But no! he cherished no rebellious feelings, uttered no murmuring words, and in the intensity and poignancy of his grief gave utterance to that expressive language of resignation which has found a response in so many christian hearts since then, and showed his own, firmly anchored where earth's sweeping billows could not reach it, even this: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

He did not charge God with acting unkindly toward him, but felt as perfectly satisfied with the *privation* which the hand of God had occasioned, as he was with the affluence and health that hand had bestowed.

This is a transaction indeed, that gives a strong and vivid coloring to the character of Job, and makes him a perfect pattern of patience and holy submission under the most severe and complicated trials.

In this Satan was utterly disappointed; he found a man who loved his God more than his earthly portion, and enraged to be thus baffled, he presented himself once more before God, and asserted that Job continued thus faithful because he knew that God would reward his constancy with an equal or even greater portion of earthly blessings; but if he would afflict his *body* by some grievous disease, he would soon abandon his service, and be at the end of his patience.

In order fully to show the piety of this exemplary man, the Lord permitted him to do as he pleased, and he became the subject of continued and protracted suffering, the aggravation of which was heightened by the loss of his usual comforts, in a temporal point of view.

His wife, who was still spared him, thought his situation sufficiently trying to excite bitter murmurings, and with a spirit not at all in unison with his, intimated the worthlessness of his confidence, and the folly of maintaining his integrity, since it was of so little apparent advantage. The afflicted, suffering husband heard only to rebuke, and with a still trusting heart exclaimed:—"Shall we receive good at the the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" As if to say, "shall we murmur when he afflicts us for a *day*, since he has given us health for so many years? Shall we complain about *momentary privations*, when he has given us such a long successson of enjoyments? His blessings are his own; he never *gave*, but only *lent* them. We have had the long, the free, the unmerited use of them, and shall we be offended at the owner, when he comes to claim his own property?"

The testimony given of Job in all this, is that "he sinned not." He still exercised the same pious trust in heaven,—showed the same devout submission, though property, family and health had all forsaken him.

His friends came together to comfort him, but his was that silent, soul-felt grief, that words only mock; and for seven days and nights they sat by him, with no attempt to answer the design of their visit; but at length he opened his mouth to wish he had long since reached that land where the weary rest, and the wicked trouble not.

Then follows those chapters of protracted converse between themselves, which drew from Job the expression that his friends were "miserable comforters," and strongly marks in the case of the former, the struggle of piety and resignation with continued affliction, violent temptation, and gloomy providences.

At one time Satan seems to have access to his mind, and

he laments the change in his former condition, and bewails his unparalled sufferings; but again he rises to joyful exultation, and exclaims, "I know that my Redeemer liveth."

For a brief period he asserts his own innocence, and anon condemns himself, and fully justifies the ways of God to man.

A little season he is downcast, and anticipates a speedy death, and upon this he looks up, and with holy confidence declares, "though He slay me, yet I will trust in Him."

Now he is fully conscious of the presence of God, and then with sadness of spirit he is heard to say, "O that I but knew where I might find him."

Thus was Job led through a variety of experience, and having been sufficiently tried to answer the purpose designed by heaven, the Lord turned again his captivity, and caused the brightness of his former days to encircle his life, and a double measure of prosperity to be given him.

He came forth from affliction "as gold tried in the fire," having shown the unmistakable elements of christian character, and hopes placed upon the sure basis—the immovable foundation,—even the *Eternal Rock.*

Now was he prepared for a heartier appreciation, and to enter with a keener and purer zest into the enjoyment of all those things which the Lord graciously pleased should crown the remainder of his days as a reward for his faithfulness and integrity during his season of temptation and trial.

His brothers and sisters, friends and acquaintances returned unto him with words of comfort and consolation, and in this are we presented with a striking view of human friendship. His *brethren*, who in the time of his affliction, kept at a distance from him; his kinsfolk, who ceased to know him; his familiar friends, who had forgotten him, and his *acquaintance* who had made themselves perfect strangers to him; those to whom he had showed kindness, and who had ungratefully neglected him, on the return of his prosperity now come and condole with him, desirous of renewing their former intimacy; and according to the custom of Eastern countries, where there is no approaching a great man without a testimonial of regard, each one brings a jewel of gold.

Some suppose his friends the cause of his sudden accumulation of property; that they did not visit him, nor seek his familiarity because he was again prosperous, but because they saw that God had "*turned his captivity*," and miraculously healed him. This gave them full proof of his innocence, and they no longer considered him a person whom they should avoid and detest, but one who had been suffering under a strange dispensation of Divine Providence, and who was now no longer a suspicious character, but a favorite of heaven, to whom they should show every possible kindness. They therefore joined hands with God to make the poor man live, and their presents were the cause under God, of his restoration to affluence.

Others suppose that Job, being miraculously restored, armed his servants and remaining friends, and fell upon those who had spoiled him, and not only recovered his own property, but also spoiled the spoilers, and thus his substance became double what it was before.

Be this as it may, "the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than the beginning," and peace and plenty once more surrounded him.

Fair daughters and many sons were again around him, and for a full hundred and forty years he rejoiced in the good things of this life,—an enjoyment greatly heightened by his recognition of the Divine favor and goodness in it all.

How long he lived before the days of his adversity is not fully known. Some think it was a time precisely equal to that he saw after, and others think still longer.

That he died "*old* and full of days," is the record we have of him. That he died *satisfied with this life*, is also evident.

He had seen life in all its varieties; he had risen higher than all the men of the East, and sunk lower in affliction, poverty and distress, than any other human being that had existed before, or has lived since.

He knew the *worst* and the best of human life; and in himself the whole history of Providence was exemplified and illustrated, and many of its mysteries unfolded.

Rarely, if ever, even in sacred history, do we find one in

whom the true graces of character are more happily blended, than in Job; none who afford a more perfect exemplification of the cardinal virtues of christianity amid a painful combination of circumstances that were such, as not only to task human nature to its utmost point of endurance, but also try with untold severity the keener and more sensitive part of being—the spiritual nature.

It was said of him, that he "was perfect and upright, fearing God and eschewing evil," and such a character surely approximates in a good degree to the gospel standard of perfection; for in this is comprised the height and depth of christian character; the length and breadth of christian duty and experience. It shows the purpose of existence accomplished,—the end of life gained, and the individual ready for the sentence of joyful acquittal at the court of heaven.

The patience, resignation and submission of Job to the Divine will, are the most prominent points of his character which are presented to our view. He bore the loss of every thing which a worldly man values, without one unsanctified feeling, or murmuring word. And it is in this respect that he is recommended to our notice, and to our imitation. His *wailings* relative to the *mental* agonies through which he passed, do not at all affect this part of his character. He bore the loss of his goods, the total ruin of his extensive and invaluable establishment, and the destruction of his hopes in the awful death of his children, without uttering a reprehensible word, or indulging an irreligious feeling.

The greatest, the most important purposes were accomplished by his trial.

He became a much better man than ever he was before; the dispensations of God's providence were illustrated and justified; Satan's devices unmasked; patience crowned and rewarded, and the Church of God greatly enriched by having bequeathed to it the vast treasury of Divine truth which is found in the *Book of Job.*

Various opinions exist as to the authenticity of this book; and much controversy has been excited with reference to the questions, "*when*, *how*, and by whom was it written?"

Learned men have given us the result of their conjectures, and where *one* has come to consider it rather as a *splendid poem* on an ethic subject, than a *real history* of the man whose name it bears, another looks upon it as a mere prose allegory; while multitudes of others have each their own favorite opinions.

But, whoever was the author, and in whatsoever *time* it may have been written, the Jewish and Christian church have ever received it as a *canonical book*, recommended by the inspiration of the Almighty.

That it has a grand use, every christian knows, for it casts much light on seemingly partial displays of Divine Providence, and has ever been the great text-book of godly men in a state of persecution and affliction.

It is in many respects an obscure book, because it refers to all the *wisdom of the East.*

It shows the author well acquainted with all the wisdom and learning of the ancient world, and of his own times, as it obviously makes continual references to *sciences* the most exalted and useful, and to *arts* the most difficult and ornamental.

As a poet he stands next to David and Isaiah; and as his subjects have been more varied than theirs, he well knew how to avail himself of this circumstance, and has pressed into his service all the influence and beauty of his art, to make the four persons whom he brings upon the stage, keep up each his proper character, and maintain the opinions which they respectively undertook to defend. The systematic arrangement which is discoverable in the book, shows three distinct series of arguments, in each of which the speakers are regularly allowed their respective turns, and at their close a summing up of the whole controversy is given, with its effect on those concerned. A suffering hero is at first presented to us, surrounded by his so-called friends, who for seven successive days and nights observe a most profound silence, being awed and confounded at sight of the unprecedented affliction and sorrow which met their eyes. Then Eliphaz the Temanite, having sufficiently contemplated the

scene before him, and heard the bitter complaint of his friend, seems to forget he came as a *comforter*, and not as a *reprover*, and opens his mouth in words that seem calculated to tear from the sufferer his only remaining consolation,—the testimony of a good conscience,—by intimating that if he possessed that righteousness of which he boasted, he would not have been so suddenly cast down by adversity.

To give himself the more authority, he professes to have received a vision from God, in which he was taught the secret of the Divine dispensations in Providence, and a confirmation of the doctrine which he was now stating to his friend, but which he applies in a different manner to what was designed.

He indeed employs beautiful figures and forcible allusions, and has many wise sayings and marked instances to illustrate his point, but he miserably perverts them in his application of them to Job's case and character.

Painfully sensible of this, the afflicted man severely rebukes his inconsistency, and in the bitterness of his soul complains of the harshness and deceitfulness of his friends, whom he compares to a "deceitful brook," and relates in a touching manner the peculiar aggravation of the sorrow which filled his "wearisome days," that seemed bereft of even the cheering rays of hope.

Bildad, another of the company, interprets some of the words of Job as an attempt to justify himself, and interrupts him by saying that God is just, and punishes only for iniquity, and refers to the ancients as signal examples of the truth.

He produces instances in the vegetable world,—the *rush* and the *flag*, and other things of brief duration, to show how soon the wicked are cut off, and their hopes perish, at the same time asserting that God never did cast off a perfect man, and that if his friend was in reality innocent, the result would show it, for in that case his end of necessity, must be prosperous.

Quite as conscious of man's sinfulness as his friends, and as fully confident of the Divine justice, Job can not forbear

an acknowledgement of these truths, and he replies to celebrate in a sublime manner the almighty power of God, as he saw it manifested in the earth, and the heavens, The elements around him, the constellations above him, teach him a lesson of unmistakeable import, and he makes use of it to sustain the position he assumes. With Him alone who "spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea; which maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the chambers of the south; which doeth great things past finding out; yea, and wonders without number,"—even with such a one would I plead my cause.

Zophar, the last of the three, can no longer restrain himself, but instead of applying balm to the wounds his friends had made, he probes still deeper, and becomes his most inveterate accuser.

He addresses himself to one who is already overburdened with grief, and says, "O that God would speak, and open his lips against thee;" then wouldst thou "know that he exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity deserveth;"—a prayer that shows little of feeling or charity, and quite as little *humanity*.

Wert thou only righteous, he says, or if thou wilt become so, then shall thy prosperity arise bright as the "morning," and clear as the "noonday."

To this Job replies in language of strong irony, "No doubt ye are *the* people, and wisdom shall die with you,"—as if to say, human wisdom may be concentrated in you, and when you die, it may not be found on the face of the earth.

He protracts his discourse, in which he again strongly rebukes the harsh and uncharitable judgment of his friends, appeals to the Lord for encouragement and hope, and argues the misery and sinfulness of man's life; giving an idea of its shortness by many happily chosen images, like the following: "Man cometh forth like a *flower*, and is soon cut down; he fleeth also as a *shadow*, and continueth not. His days are swifter than a *weaver's shuttle*;—swifter than a frost; they flee away, they see no good. They are passed away as the *swift ships*; as an *eagle* that hasteth to the prey."

Once and again after this, the three friends of Job go through with their round of argument, to the same purpose, and in each instance are met with a response from him, showing his adherence to his former position.

In all Job seems to have the advantage, while the speeches of his friends show but little besides a tissue of borrowed *wise sayings*, and *ancient proverbs* and *maxims*, relative to God, and his moral government of the world; from the seemingly inexhaustible treasures of his own mind, he seems to draw at ease, every desirable material for the expression of his thoughts and feelings.

What more beautiful than his exaltation of heavenly wisdom, the beauty and excellency of which he faintly shadows forth by "costly rubies;" and his use of the majestic appearances of nature, to speak the power and glory of the Omnipotent.

Nothing is brought to issue, and weary at last with their own repetitions, his friends give up the contest, and Elihu, a bystander, perceiving this, comes forward and takes a part, and though he speaks well, he is incapable of closing the controversy, and God himself appears at last and decides the case.

In the speech of Elihu every thing appears to be original; he speaks from a deep and comprehensive mind, that had profoundly studied the subjects on which he discoursed. His descriptions of the Divine attributes, and of the wonderful works of God, are correct, splendid, impressive and inimitable. Having come nearly to a close, and knowing that the Almighty would appear and speak for himself, he judiciously prepares for and announces his coming by thunder and lightning, of which he gives a terrific and majestic description. The evidences of the Divine presence throng on his eyes and mind; the incomprehensible glory and excellency of God confound all his powers of reasoning and description; he can not arrange his words by reason of darkness, and he concludes with stating, that to poor weak man God must for ever remain incomprehensible, and a subject of deep religious fear and reverence.

Just then the terrible majesty of the Lord appears! Elihu is silent.

The rushing mighty wind, for which the description of the thunder and lightning had prepared poor, confounded, astonished Job, proclaims the presence of Jehovah: and out of this whirlwind God answers for and proclaims himself.

Such new and wonderful disclosures of the Infinite, humbled Job to the earth, and brought him to the very point heaven designed he should be brought.

While his three friends were standing in need of sacrifice to insure favor, the fullness of the Divine blessing descended upon the penitent man, and he was at once reinstated in his former dignity, with more than his former wealth and prosperity. The whole is, indeed, a powerfully wrought picture, with harmony of design and most exquisite shading.

The book is evidently a poem, and one too, of the highest order, dealing in subjects the most grand and sublime; using imagery the most chaste and appropriate, described by language the most happy and energetic; conveying instruction both in Divine and human things, the most ennobling and useful; abounding in precepts the most pure and exalted, which are enforced by arguments the most strong and conclusive, and illustrated by examples the most natural and striking.

It is *genuine poetry*, which has been compared to "a mountain flood, pouring down, resistless in its might, bursting all bounds, wearing its own channel, carrying woods and rocks before it, and spreading itself abroad, both deep and wide, over all the plain."

Whatever may be said of it, it is on all hands accounted a work that contains "the purest morality, the sublimest philosophy, the simplest ritual, and a most majestic creed."

CHAPTER XII.

Isaiah.

PROBABLE TIME OF APPOINTMENT TO THE SACRED OFFICE; LENGTH OF TIME THEREIN; TRADITIONS OF HIS FAMILY AND HIS OWN DEATH.

OF ISAIAH very little is known. He is supposed to have been of the tribe of Judah, and of the royal family of David. Himself says that he was the son of Amoz; and others tell us that this Amoz was the son of Joash, and brother of Amaziah, king of Judah. "Of his family and tribe we know nothing," says R. D. Krinchi, "only our rabbins of blessed memory have received the tradition that Amoz and Amaziah were brothers;" and it is on this ground that he has been called the *royal prophet.* Several commentators have thought that his prophesies afford presumptive evidence of his high descent and elegant education:

1. Because his style is more correct and majestic than any of the other prophets.

2. That his frequent use of images taken from royalty is a proof that this state was familiar to him, being much at court, as he must have been, had he been the brother of the king.

These things are spoken by many with much confidence; but the circumstance that he drew directly from the fount of Divine inspiration, gives a surer basis for the correctness of his style, and the dignity of his sentiments, than those inferior helps. On the other hypothesis, nothing is left to the *Divine Spirit,* except the mere matter of the prophecies. Suppositions of this kind are not creditable to Divine revelation.

That Isaiah obtained a solemn designation to the prophetic office, is sure.

The vision in the sixth chapter of his prophecy, which contains the particulars of this, is thought by most interpreters

to be the first in order of his prophecies, but as many things tend to show they were not placed in exact order of time, this may be considered a new designation, to introduce more solemnly a general dedication of the whole course of God's dispensations in regard to his people and the destiny of the nation.

In this vision the ideas are taken in general from royal majesty, as displayed by the monarchs of the East; for the prophet could not represent the ineffable presence of God by any other than sensible and earthly images. The particular scenery of it seems to be taken from the temple.

The special mission of Isaiah was to the Jews. He was a faithful messenger, declaring the "whole counsel of God," on all occasions exhorting the people to regard the *Divine* communication as a matter of personal concern and highest interest. From the time the heavenly vision had constrained him to a self-pronounced "wo," he had seemed to perform his duties with an abiding sense of the responsibility of a heaven-commissioned prophet. We see him showing the same earnestness whether proclaiming the solemn denunciations of God's wrath against the sins of his people, or bearing messages of mercy and promises of deliverance to the chosen ones.

His sublime annunciations with regard to the Redeemer of the world have long since received a complete and glorious fulfillment, while others relative to the Jewish nation are still depending, and will not be fully accomplished till the final restoration of Israel.

That he exercised the prophetical office during a long period of time, is evident, if he lived to the reign of Manasseh; for the lowest computation, beginning from the year in which Uzziah died, when some suppose him to have received his first appointment to that office, brings it to sixty-one years. Yet circumstances exist which render it more probable that he died before Hezekiah.

It is, however, certain that he lived at least to the fifteenth or sixteenth year of this king; thus making the least possible term of the duration of his prophetical office about forty-eight years.

The time of the delivery of some of his prophecies is either expressly marked, or sufficiently clear from the history to which they relate; that of a few others may with some probability be deduced from internal marks; from expressions, descriptions, and circumstances interwoven.

Isaiah appears to have had two sons, who were typical in their names; one Shear-jashub, a "remnant shall return;" and the other Maher-shalal-hashbaz, "haste to the spoil; quick to the prey;" and it is remarkable that his wife is called a prophetess. It has also been said that he gave his daughter in marriage to Manasseh, son of Hezekiah, king of Judah; and that himself was put to death by Manasseh, being sawn asunder with a wooden saw. These traditions, however, stand on very slender authority, and are worthy of very little regard. What though Scripture and history be alike silent as to the manner of his death, it is sufficient to know God provides for his faithful ones, by bringing them to himself, and dispensing from his own hand their appropriate reward

CHAPTER XIII.

Jeremiah.

CALL TO PROPHETIC IN EARLY YOUTH; RELUCTANCE TO ASSUME IT ON THIS ACCOUNT; PERSECUTION AND IMPRISONMEMT; CAPTIVITY AND DEATH.

THE prophet Jeremiah, son of Hilkiah, was of the sacerdotal race, and a native of Anathoth, a village in the tribe of Benjamin, within a few miles of Jerusalem, which had been appointed for the use of the priests, the descendants of Aaron.

He was called to the prophetic office when very young, probably when he was fourteen years of age, and in the thirteenth of the reign of Josiah. A. M. 3375, B. C. 629.

On account of his youth and incapacity for the work, he endeavored to excuse himself; but, being overruled by the Divine authority, he undertook the task, and performed it

with matchless zeal and fidelity in the midst of a most crooked and perverse people, by whom he was continually persecuted, and whom he boldly reproved, often at the hazard of his life.

At one time persecuted and imprisoned, his faith wavered, and he formed a hasty resolution to renounce the prophetic office, and make no more mention of the word of the Lord; but the voice of accusing conscience speedily called him to reflection, and he was ashamed of his own weakness, that did not confide in the Divine promise. A holy determination to go on, relying upon the Lord, delivered him from all fear, and enabled him to exult in the Divine protection. Though he remained in the same circumstances, with strong confidence in a strong God, he pursued his calling, fearing not his adversaries. Subsequently his bold and fearless utterance of the Divine predictions brought him to the dungeon, but his heart remained strong, and his courage firm.

He continued to prophesy till after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, which took place A. M. 3416; and it is supposed that about two years after he died in Egypt.

The circumstances of his death are related as follows: After the destruction of Jerusalem Nebuchadnezzar having made Gedaliah governor of Judea, the fractious Jews rose up against him, and put him to death; they then escaped to Tahpanhes in Egypt, carrying Jeremiah with them; who, continuing to testify against their wickedness and idolatry, at length fell a victim to his faithfulness: they filled up the measure of their iniquity, as tradition reports, by stoning the prophet to death. God marked this murderous outrage by his peculiar displeasure; for in a few years after they were almost all miserably destroyed by the Chaldean armies which had invaded Egypt; and even this destruction had been foretold by the prophet himself. (Chap. 44th:) "They were consumed by the sword and by the famine until there was an end of them, a small remnant only escaping." It appears he discharged the duties of the prophetic office upward of forty years. As a writer, Jeremiah is by no

means wanting, either in elegance or sublimity; although, generally speaking, inferior to Isaiah in both.

St. Jerome has objected to him a certain *rusticity* in his diction; others allow not the smallest trace of it. His thoughts, indeed, are somewhat less elevated, and he is commonly more large and diffuse in his sentences; but the reason of this may be, that he is mostly taken up with the gentler passions of *grief* and *pity*, for the expression of which he has a peculiar talent. This is most evident in the Lamentations, where those passions altogether predominate; but it is often visible also in his prophesies; in the former part of his book more especially, which is principally poetical. The middle parts are for the most part historical; but the last part, consisting of six chapters, is entirely poetical, and contains several oracles distinctly marked, in which this prophet falls very little short of the loftiest style of Isaiah.

"Never," it has been said, "was there a more rich and elegant variety of beautiful images and adjuncts arranged together within so small a compass, nor more happily chosen and applied, than in the inimitable poem of Lamentations. One would think that every letter was written with a tear; every word, the sound of a breaking heart: that the author was compacted of sorrows; disciplined to grief from his infancy; one who never breathed but in sighs, nor spoke but in a groan."

The attachment of Jeremiah to his country was strong and fervent; he foresaw by the light of prophecy the ruin that was coming upon it. He might have made terms with the enemy, and not only saved his life, but have gained ease and plenty; but he chose rather to continue with his people, and take his part in all the disasters that befell them.

We can not too much admire the full and graceful flow of that pathetic eloquence in which the author pours forth the effusions of a patriotic heart, and piously weeps over the ruins of his venerable country. But it was observed before that the prophet's peculiar talent lay in working up and expressing the passions of grief and *pity*, and unhappily

for him as a man and a citizen, he met with a subject but too well calculated to give his genius its full display. David in several places has forcibly depicted the sorrows of a heart oppressed with penitential sorrow; but where, in a composition of such length, have bodily misery and mental agony been more successfully painted? All the expressions and images of sorrow are here exhibited in various combinations, and in various points of view. Misery has no expression that the author of the Lamentations has not employed.

Patriots! you who tell us you burn for your country's welfare, look at the prophesies and history of this extraordinary man; look at his Lamentations; take him through his life to his death, and learn from him what *true patriotism* means! The man who watched, prayed, and lived for the welfare of his country, who chose to share her adversities, her sorrows, her wants, her afflictions and disgrace, where he might have been a companion of princes, and have sat at the table of kings; who only ceased to live for his country when he ceased to breathe;—that was a patriot, in comparison with whom almost all others are obscured, minished and brought low, or are totally annihilated!

CHAPTER XIV.

Ezekiel.

CIRCUMSTANCES ATTENDING HIS PROPHETIC CALL; ARDOR IN ENTERING UPON IT; PECULIAR QUALITIES AS A WRITER; CONSULTATION OF RABBINS CONCERNING HIS ADMISSION INTO THE SACRED CANON.

CONCERNING the lives and deaths of many of the prophets, sacred history gives but few if any particulars.

Their writings, however, are sufficient for us to discover their distinguishing traits of character, and leading qualities of mind. It is the mind religiously

bent upon accomplishing the Divine will that God peculiarly regards, and every where honors, and this is manifest in Ezekiel.

This prophet was the son of Buzi; of the sacerdotal race, as he himself tells us, and was born at a place called Saresa.

He was carried captive by Nebuchadnezzar into Babylon, with Jeconiah, king of Judah, and three thousand other captives of the principal inhabitants, and was sent into Mesopotamia, where he received the prophetic gift; which is supposed, from an obscure expression in his prophesies, to have taken place in the thirtieth year of his age.

He had then been in captivity five years, comforting his companions in tribulation, rendering their captivity lighter, by the most positive promises of their restoration to their own land, the re-building of the temple, and the reëstablishment of the Divine worship, all their enemies being finally destroyed.

At the time he received the Divine commission to declare God's counsel to the rebellious house of Israel, he also obtained the gracious assurance that God would furnish him with all needful armor for the great work. He seems to have joyously entered upon his calling, using expressions that indicate such heavenly ardor of mind as almost constrained him to fly to the place where the Lord commanded him to go. The promptitude and impetuosity of his spirit seemed to furnish him with wings for the occasion.

He continued to prophesy about twenty-two years, from A. M. 3409 to A. M. 3430, which answers to the fourteenth year after the destruction of Jerusalem.

Ezekiel, as a writer, is inferior to Jeremiah in *elegance*, but is equal to Isaiah in *sublimity*, though in a different species of the sublime. He is *bold*, *vehement*, *tragical*, and deals very much in *amplification*. His sentiments are *lofty*, *animated*, *poignant*, and full of *indignation*. His images are *fertile* and *magnificent*. His diction is *grand*, *weighty*, *austere*, *rough*, and sometimes *uncultivated*. He abounds in repetitions, not for the sake of *beauty* and *grace*, but from vehemence and indig-

nation. Whatever his subject be, he keeps it always in his eye, without the least deviation, and is so much taken up with it that he has scarcely any regard to order or connection. In other things he may be perhaps exceeded by the other prophets, but in that species for which he was particularly turned, that is, *force*, *impetuosity*, *weight* and *grandeur*, no writer ever equaled him.

That he is an *obscure writer*, all have allowed who have attempted to explain his prophesies; yet his obscurity arises more from his subjects, than his diction.

The Jews considered him inexplicable.

There is a tradition that the rabbins held a consultation whether they should admit Ezekiel into the sacred canon. It was likely to be carried in the negative, when Rabbi Ananias rose up and said he would undertake to remove every difficulty from the account of Jehovah's chariot, (chap. 1st,) which is confessedly the most difficult part in the whole book. His proposal was received; and to assist him in his work, and that he might complete it to his credit, they furnished him with three hundred barrels of oil to light his lamp during the time he might be employed in the study of this part of his subject! This extravagant grant proved at once the conviction the rabbins had of the difficulty of the work; and it is not even intimated that the Rabbi succeeded in any tolerable degree, if, indeed, he undertook the task; and they believe to this hour the *chariot* mentioned in chapter 1st, and the account of the *temple* described at the conclusion of the book have not been explained.

A generally acknowledged character of Ezekiel is, that he minutely distinguishes every thing in its smallest parts. What the more ancient prophets simply alluded to, and briefly explained, he unfolds and explains formally, representing it from all possible sides.

Another character, and a principal one, which distinguishes his oracle is, that no other prophet has given so free a course to his imagination. Almost every thing is dressed in symbolical actions, in fables, narrations, allegories, or in the still higher poetry of visions.

If the dress of vision fitted any prophet, it was certainly Ezekiel: he was even naturally led to it by his situation, and by the subjects he was to represent.

He uses all sorts of prophetical poetry to appear always great and magnificent; and it can not be denied that he has given all kinds, excellent pieces, both in design and execution. Particularly, he is so used to ecstacies and visions that he adopts the language proper to these, where he has no visions to describe.

A judicious critic, who but indirectly admits the prophet's inspiration, says of him, Ezekiel is a great poet, full of originality; and whoever censures him as if he were only an imitator of the old prophets, can never have felt his power.

Those are great, Ezekiel is also great; those in their manner, Ezekiel in his.

How different soever the species of composition are which he hazards, they are all worked out in the same general form. What he represents in one image, picture, or vision; in allegory, parable, or narration, is explained in a short speech, which God, who is at his right hand, enables him to pronounce.

CHAPTER XV.

Daniel.

CARRIED CAPTIVE TO BABYLON; EARLY EDUCATION FOR THE KING'S COURT; INCREASING FAVOR THERE; INTERPRETATION OF THE DREAM, AND CONSEQUENT PROMOTION; HIS ARREST BY ENVIOUS MEN, WHO CAST HIM INTO A DEN OF LIONS; TRIUMPHANT DELIVERANCE; HIS PROBABLE PLACE OF DEATH.

IN THE fourth year of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, A. M. 3397, B. C. 607, Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem, made its king tributary, and carried away a number of captives. Among these was Daniel, then in his youth, destined to become by his wisdom and knowledge of future events, an eminent man in Babylon.

This was one of those events in the history of God's providential dealings with his people, that seem mysterious for the time, but are eventually made to subserve, in a glorious manner, the *ends* of Divine Providence, and in such a manner as fully to demonstrate the superior wisdom and power of the *Infinite.*

Daniel seems to have been early chosen to be in attendance at the king's court, and consequently an education suitable to his employment was appointed to him. He appears to have been instructed in all the wisdom of the Chaldeans, which was at that time greatly superior to the learning of the ancient Egyptians; and he was soon distinguished in the Babylonish court, as well for his wisdom and strong understanding as for his deep and steady piety. A commendable spirit of firmness and true nobleness of character, is manifest on our first introduction to him.

Having been carefully reared amid Mosaic institutions, he regulated his conduct by them, even in the court of a heathen king, where, too, for the time, he stood in the capacity of *slave.*

Though ordered to be fed from the royal table, he refused the food, because the Chaldeans ate of meat forbidden by the Mosaic law; and probably even that which might be denominated *clean*, became defiled by having been *sacrificed to idols* before it was prepared for common use. At his earnest request, his attending officer permitted him a vegetable diet, which proved so favorable, as to lead to a withdrawal of the king's portion entirely.

While he was enjoying special and increasing favor with the king, a circumstance occurred, which at first threatened his destruction, but finally issued in the increase of his reputation and celebrity.

The combined wisdom of the wisest being insufficient to procure the interpretation of a dream, the king in his wrath sought to sweep them from the land. Daniel, though numbered with them, interposed and entreated him to stay yet a little, and the thing should be made known.

Enlisting his three companions in his behalf, they besought

the God of Heaven, with strong confidence, till they obtained the wished-for revelation.

With devout gratitude to Him "*who revealeth secrets*," and the prime grace of the christian in active exercise,—humility,—he entered into the presence of the troubled monarch, and unfolded the things that were to be. This obtained for him royal promotion, and made him confidant and counselor of the king.

Subsequent interpretations procured for him additional emblems of magisterial authority. Called to trace the mysterious writing on the walls of the kingly palace, he fearlessly proclaimed its fearful meaning.

Envy was stirred, and wicked men finding no blemish in his administration, sought to make his faithfulness to God a *crime*, and to insure his speedy and certain destruction, cast him at once into a den of raging lions. The mighty power of faith was his, and He who ever watches over his faithful ones, procured deliverance for him in such a manner as strikingly demonstrated the power of the *Supreme God*, and drew from idolatrous man an acknowledgment of his right to eternal dominion.

The reputation of Daniel, even in his life-time, was so great that it became a proverb.

"Thou art wiser than Daniel," said Ezekiel ironically to the king of Tyre, and by the same prophet God ranks him among the most holy and exemplary of men, when he declares, speaking relative to Jerusalem, which had been condemned to destruction: "Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own lives by their righteousness."

It is very probable that Daniel did not return at the general restoration from the Babylonish captivity. At that time, if alive, he must have been an old man; and it is most likely that he finished his days in Babylon, though some Asiatic authors hold that he returned to Judea with Ezra, came back afterward to Persia, and died in the city of Susa.

The writings of Daniel are simple, yet correct and pure; and he is so conscientious, that he relates the very words of

those persons whom he introduces as speaking. The rabbins have endeavored to degrade him, and have placed his prophecies among the *hagiographa*, books which they consider to possess a *minor degree of inspiration;* and it is probable that he meets with this treatment from them because his prophecies are proofs too evident that Jesus Christ is the true Messiah, and that he came at the very time that Daniel said the Prince Messiah should come.

But the testimony and sayings of such men are infinitely overpowered by the testimony of Ezekiel, which has been produced above; and the testimony of our Lord, who gives him the title of *prophet*, without the slightest intimation that he was to wear this title with abatement.

As prophesy is one of the strongest proofs of the authenticity of what professes to be a Divine revelation, God endued this man with a large portion of His Spirit, so that he clearly predicted some of the most astonishing political occurrences and changes which have ever taken place on the earth; no less than the rise, distinguishing characteristics, and termination of the four great *monarchies*, or *empires*, which have been so celebrated in all the histories of the world.

Nor did the prophetic spirit in this eminent man limit his predictions to these; but showed at the same time the origin and nature of that *fifth monarchy*, which, under the great King of kings, should be administered and prevail to the end of time.

Josephus says of Daniel, "that God bestowed many favors upon him: that he was advanced to the rank of the most considerable of the prophets; that he enjoyed the favor of princes, and the affection of the people during his life; and that after his death, his memory became immortal."

He observes also that, in the complexion of his predictions, he differs widely from all other prophets; they foretold scarcely any thing but *disastrous* events; on the contrary, he predicts the most *joyous* events, and fixes *the times of accomplishment* with more circumstantial precision than they did. And this is so true, that we can not help thinking that God had given this eminent man a greater degree of light to fix

the times when his predictions should issue, than He had given in general to all his predecessors, who simply declared the mind of God in relation to things *future*, without attempting to indicate the *distance of time* in which they should be fulfilled.

In this respect the prophesy of the *seventy weeks* of Daniel exceeds all that have gone before, as the incidents and transactions relative to its fulfillment were so various, and yet so fixed, and declared six hundred years before the time, that when the time came in which they were predicted to take place, they were *expected*, and occurred exactly according to the *prediction*, and the expectations founded upon it. This prophet, therefore, far from occupying a lower place among divinely inspired men, deserves to be placed in the front rank with all those who have been most distinguished among the men who have partaken most largely of the prophetic gift.

CHAPTER XVI.

Hosea.

HIS EARLY HISTORY SHROUDED IN UNCERTAINTY; TIME EMBRACED IN HIS PROPHESY; FAITHFULNESS IN DISPENSING THE LORD'S MESSAGE.

HOSEA, the son of Beeri, is the first in the scale of minor prophets. Concerning his origin and future life, various opinions exist.

Some say he was of the town of Belemoth, in the tribe of Issachar; which is no other, in all probability, than Beelmeon, toward Esdraelon, in this tribe.

Others say that *Bura* was his father, who is mentioned in the Chronicles, and was prince of the tribe of Reuben at the time when Tiglath-pileser carried some of the tribes of Israel into captivity.

But if it be so, Hosea must be said to be of the tribe of Reuben; and a native of Beelmeon, beyond Jordan. This

prophet lived in the kingdom of Samaria, and his prophesies for the most part have a view to this state, though there are likewise some particular things which concern the kingdom of Judah.

In the introduction to his prophesy, it is said he prophesied under the kings of Judah, from Uzziah to Hezekiah, and under Jereboam, king of Israel. This embraces a period of one hundred and twelve years. Add to this twenty or twenty-five years which might have been the age of Hosea, when he began to prophesy, and this will make one hundred and thirty-two or one hundred and thirty-seven years.

In the whole collection of his writings, we find nothing which proves that he prophesied so long. And, besides, why should his prophesies be dated in the title by the reigns of the kings of Judah, when he did not live under their dominion? It is therefore probable this title is the work of some ancient transcriber, rather than that of Hosea; and that the true beginning of this prophet's work is at the words: "The beginning of the word of the Lord by Hosea." It is probable he began about the end of Jereboam's reign, who was the second king of Israel of this name.

It is, after all, the most important consideration, that he was faithful to the high trust imposed upon him. He inveighed strongly against the idolatrous practices of the children of Israel, and reflected with equal severity upon the irregularities which reigned in Judah.

He declared without reserve the threatenings of God's vengeance upon an apostate people, and spoke His gracious promises to the penitent.

The style of Hosea is obscure, and his expressions often dubious and perplexed.

The things whereof he speaks contribute further to his obscurity, by reason of their distance, and our ignorance of the history of those times.

He is concise, sententious, and abrupt.

His transitions from wrathful denunciations to promises of abundant mercy, are rapid and unexpected.

He abounds with short and lively comparisons; and, like

the best Greek and Roman writers, often omits the particle of similitude. These comparisons he sometimes accumulates in the spirit of that poetry which is most admired.

He has often a great force of expression,—is sometimes highly animated. Many beautiful passages occur in this prophet, as in the similes throughout; in the allegories; the pathos, and figures.

Instructive, convincing, awakening, and yet consolatory, are the words of this prophesy.

There are some parts of it truly sublime,—parts where Isaiah, the master prophet, alone, could have done better.

CHAPTER XVII.

Joel.

OPINIONS OF CRITICS IN RESPECT TO THE TIME HE BEGAN TO PROPHESY, OBSCURITY RESTING UPON IT; OPINION OF THE HEBREWS; CHARACTER OF PROPHESY; STRIKING SIMILARITY TO EZEKIEL.

JOEL, the son of Pethuel, the second of the twelve minor prophets, was, as is said, of the tribe of Reuben, and city of Bethoran; or rather Betharan, for the former was on this side Jordan, in the tribe of Ephraim, and the latter on the other side of the river, in the tribe of Reuben.

Joel prophesied in the kingdom of Judah; and it is the opinion of some critics, that he did not appear there till after the removal of the ten tribes and the destruction of the kingdom of Israel. But the year wherein he began to prophesy, or the year in which he died, is not distinctly known.

He speaks of a great famine, and an inundation of locusts which ravaged Judea; but as these are evils not uncommon in that country, and all sorts of events have not been registered in history, we can infer nothing from thence toward fixing the particular period of time when he entered upon his sacred office.

Many writers, both ancient and modern, believe Joel to have been contemporary with Hosea, according to a rule that has been laid down, that when there is no certain proof of the time wherein any prophet lived, we are to be directed in our conjectures by the time of the preceding prophet, whose epoch is better known. This rule, however, is not always certain, and should not hinder us from following another system, if we have good reason for doing so. The Hebrews maintain that Joel prophesied under Manasseh; and as collateral circumstances seem to preponderate in favor of this hypothesis, it has been accordingly followed.

Joel commences his prophesy very abruptly; and before he proposes his subject, excites attention and alarm by intimating that he is about to announce disastrous events, such as the *oldest man* among them has never seen, nor any of them learn from the histories of ancient times. To heighten the effect, he conceals the subject, and informs them that it is such as should be handed down from father to son through all generations.

He reiterates exhortations to repentance, that the Divine judgments may be averted. He speaks of things relating to the new covenant, foretells a "teacher of righteousness," and the copious effusion of the Holy Spirit, which found its fulfillment on the day of Pentecost.

He shows a bright day for the christian church. It is the word of the Lord, and must be accomplished. The mighty and rapid spread of the Gospel of Christ in the *present day*, by means of the translation of the Scriptures into almost all the regular languages of the world, and the sending missionaries to all nations, who preach the Gospel in those tongues, are further proofs that the great promise is in the *fullest progress* to be speedily fulfilled, even in the utmost sense of the words.

The style of Joel differs much from that of Hosea, but though of a different kind, is equally poetical. It is elegant, perspicuous, clear, diffusive, and flowing; and at the same time, very sublime, nervous, and animated. He displays the whole power of poetic description in the first and second

chapters; and at the same time, his fondness for metaphors, comparisons and allegories; nor is the connection of his subjects less remarkable than the graces of his diction. It is not to be denied that in some places he is very obscure; which every attentive reader will perceive, especially in the end of the prophecy.

The two first chapters are inimitably beautiful; and the language, in force, and often in *sound*, well adapted to the subject.

This prophet who has many things similar to Ezekiel, ends his prophecy in nearly the same way; both pointing out the continued indwelling of Christ among his people.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Amos.

CALLED FROM THE HUMBLE POSITION OF "HERDSMAN" TO BE THE LORD'S MESSENGER; HIS PRIME MISSION TO ISRAEL; HIS ACCUSATION BEFORE THE KING; VARIOUS OPINIONS IN REGARD TO HIS DEATH.

OW widely different the economy of God from that of man. The latter, when desirous of special commissioners to represent their interests, look only to the great and talented; but God chooses oftener from the lowest ranks of life his extraordinary messengers to proclaim His eternal counsels.

At times he uses the eloquence of some, yet oftener makes the *humble* eloquent, to subserve his great purposes. He always chooses the *proper* interpreters of His will, wherever they may be.

The same heavenly spirit which inspired Isaiah and Daniel in the palace, inspired David and Amos in their shepherd's tents.

Amos, the third of the minor prophets, was a herdsman, and "gatherer of sycamore fruit," which he collected probably for his own subsistence. He was of the little town of

Tekoa, it is said, in the tribe of Judah, about four leagues southward of Jerusalem. There is no good proof, however, that he was a native of this place; but only that he retired thither when he was driven from Bethel, which was in the kingdom of the ten tribes. It is very probable that he was born within the territories of Israel, and that his mission was directed principally to this kingdom.

He began to prophesy the second year before the earthquake, which happened in the reign of King Vizziah; and which most of the ancient and modern commentators refer to this prince's usurpation of the priest's office, when he attempted to offer incense to the Lord.

The first of his promises, in the order of time, are those of the *seventh* chapter. The others he pronounced in the town of Tekoa, whither he retired.

He foretold the misfortunes into which the kingdom of Israel should fall after the death of Jereboam the second, who was then living.

He foretold the death of King Zeckariah; the invasion of the lands belonging to Israel, by Pul and Tiglath-pileser, kings of Assyria; and speaks of the captivity of the ten tribes, and of their return into their own country. He makes sharp invectives against the sins of Israel; against their effeminacy and avarice, their harshness to the poor, the splendor of their buildings, and the delicacy of their tables.

Bethel, Dan, Gilgal and Beersheba were then the famous pilgrimages of the country. Severely did he reprove them for leaving the God of Heaven for these unavailable exertions and idolatrous practices.

At a time when he was prophesying in Bethel where the golden calves were, the high priest brought an accusation against him before the king, declaring him to be concerned in a conspiracy against the government. The disturbed monarch issued his royal command, and bade the prophet of God flee from the land, and never more let his voice be heard in his kingly court. E'en then the fearless messenger of the Most High opened his lips and pronounced the dreadful, yet righteous doom of the king.

He then went to the kingdom of Judah, to the retirement of Tekoa. He complains in many places of the violence offered him by endeavoring to oblige him to silence, and bitterly exclaims against the disorders of Israel.

The time and manner of his death are not known. Some old authors relate that Amaziah, priest of Bethel, who informed against him to the king, provoked by his discourses, had his teeth broken in order to silence him. Others say that Hosea, or Uzziah, the son of Amaziah, struck him with a stake upon his temples, and knocked him down, and almost killed him; that in this condition he was carried to Tekoa, where he died, and was buried with his fathers. On the contrary, it is the opinion of others, that he prophesied a long time after the adventure he had with Amaziah: and the prophet taking no notice of the ill treatment which he is said to have received from Uzziah, his silence is no argument that he suffered nothing from him.

Some writers represent this prophet as entirely rude, void of eloquence, and wanting in all the embellishments of style; whereas, any one who reads him with due attention will find him, though a herdsman, not a whit behind the very chiefest prophets; almost equal to the greatest in the loftiness of his sentiments, and not inferior to any in the splendor of his diction, and the elegance of his composition.

As every one chooses to speak of his own art, Amos generally makes use of comparisons taken from the country life wherein he had been brought up. He borrows many images from the scenes in which he was engaged; but he introduces them with skill, and gives them tone and dignity by eloquence and grandeur of his manner. We shall find in him many affecting and pathetic, many eloquent and sublime passages.

No prophet has more magnificently described the Deity, or more gravely rebuked the luxurious, or reproved injustice and oppression with greater warmth, and a more generous indignation.

He is a prophet on whose model a preacher may safely form his style and manner in luxurious and profligate times.

CHAPTER XIX.

Obadiah.

FACTS OF HIS PROPHECY REVEAL THE PROBABLE TIME WHEN HE EXERCISED THE OFFICE; PROOF OF HIS DIVINE COMMISSION.

WHO was this prophet? *where* born? of *what country?* at *what time* did he prophesy? who were his parents? when and where did he die? are questions which have been asked from the remotest antiquity; and which, to this day, have recived no answer worthy of recording. There is a multitude of opinions concerning these points; and their multitude and discrepancy are the strongest proofs of their uncertainty.

All that seems probable is, that, as he prophesied concerning the destruction of Edom, he flourished a little before or a little after, the taking of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, which happened about five hundred and eighty-eight years before Christ; and the destruction of Idumea by the same monarch, which took place a short time after, probably between 588 B. C., and 575 B. C., in the interval of the *thirteen* years which Nebuchadnezzar employed in the siege of Tyre, which he undertook immediately after the capture of Jerusalem.

Obadiah foretells the subduction of the Idumeans by the Chaldeans, and finally by the Jews, whom they had used most cruelly, when brought low by other enemies. These prophecies have been literally fulfilled; for the Idumeans, as a nation, are totally extinct.

Obadiah, like the other prophets, was directed in the words he spoke, by the spirit of wisdom, and so proportioned are they to the nature of things treated of, that even they who accuse them of rusticity and impoliteness in their way of writing, could not choose a style more suitable, were they to

have spoken on the same subject, to the same persons, and in the same circumstances.

That this prophet was one in the succession of divinely inspired men, it is ours to believe.

His prophesy is brief, but it, nevertheless, secured the Divine intention.

God spoke through him, and his words were therefore essentially important to those unto whom he was sent.

CHAPTER XX.

Jonah.

CALL TO GO TO THE NINEVITES; REFUSES TO COMPLY; CAST INTO THE SEA; FINALLY DELIVERED; OBEYS THE SECOND CALL; ANGER AT THE LORD'S MERCY.

ONAH, the son of Amittai, the fifth of the minor prophets, was a Gallilean, a native of Gath-hepher, which is believed to be the same as Jotapata, celebrated for the siege which Josephus the historian, there maintained against the Roman army, a little before the destruction of Jerusalem.

There are many *legends* and *fabulous relations* connected with the history of this prophet.

Some Rabbins are of opinion that he was the son of the widow of Sarepta, who was restored to life by Elijah. But the incidents furnished us by the Bible are sufficient, and alone reliable.

As a prophet he probably received but this one mission to "go to the Ninevites."

When the word of the Lord first sounded in his ear, "Arise and go," he manifested no disposition to regard the Divine authority.

Foreseeing the difficulty and danger of the work, he sought to avoid it by the vain attempt to flee from the presence of the Lord, perhaps thinking when he was once from the land,

another might be appointed in his stead to proclaim the unwelcome message.

Ah, inconsiderate man! knowest not "the eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the *evil* and the good?"

He persisted in his rash purpose, and embarked at Joppa, but the eye of Omniscience was upon him there, and the power of Omnipotence stood pledged to arrest him. Who that ever turned from the plainly revealed intimations of Providence to his own way, but found it a rough and thorny path, hedged up with insurmountable difficulties?

Jonah was not in the path of duty, and consequently not one of safety. Once upon the sea, the Lord sent forth a violent storm, which threatened to bring them all to a watery grave. The frightened sailors, finding no relief from their gods, aroused the sleeping prophet, and bade him use his influence in discovering and averting danger, in which they were all equally involved. The final decision to cast lots detected the guilty one.

In answer to their inquiries, Jonah, for once, was faithful. He gave an honest testimony concerning the God he served, which placed him before the eyes of the sailors as infinitely higher than the objects of their adoration; for the God of Jonah was the God of Heaven, who made the sea and the dry land, and governed both. He also honestly told them that he was fleeing from the presence of this God, whose honorable call he had refused to obey.

His deep compunctions of conscience constrained him to an honest avowal of sin, and a justification of the displeasure which God had now manifested. Fully sensible that he was the procuring cause of the danger, he instructed them to cast him into the deep. When this was done the raging sea became calm. Then the sailors "offered a sacrifice;" the first, perhaps, ever offered on board a vessel since the ark floated on the waters of the great deluge; and it is quite probable these heathen, witnessing what was done, became sincere converts to the true God.

So true is it, that "God will cause the wrath of man to praise him, and the remainder of wrath he will restrain."

The dealings of the Lord with Jonah in the waters brought him to reflection, so that when the command came the second time to "go unto Ninevah," he was prepared by what he had seen and felt of the justice and mercy of the Lord to obey. He accordingly "arose and went," and proclaimed the message he was commissioned to deliver. *Penitence* so deep and effectual was felt by the people, that God reversed the sentence, and saved them.

What then thought the prophet?

His hasty and inconsiderate spirit was vexed that his prediction was not fulfilled.

He had more respect to his high sense of his own honor than he had of the goodness and mercy of the Lord. He appeared to care little whether six hundred and twenty thousand persons were destroyed or not, so he might not pass for a deceiver, or one that denounced a falsity.

His proud heart raised to the God of Heaven an impious prayer, to take his life from him, that he might be spared the mortification and disgrace of being thought a false prophet.

Thoughtless man! slow to learn the lessons of heavenly wisdom.

Some have thought the writings of Jonah a mere allegory; others that it is a parable, intending to point out God's justice and mercy, and how prevalent repentance is to turn aside the threatened stroke of Divine wrath.

But the appeal made to the main facts of this history by our Lord, proves that we are to admit of no allegorical exposition of these facts.

1. There was such a person as Jonah.

2. That he was swallowed by a sea monster, in whose belly he was miraculously preserved three days and three nights.

3. This same prophet preached to the Ninevites; and they repented, and turned from their sins under his ministry.

This testimony puts an end to all mythological, allegorical and hypothetical interpretations of these great facts.

It has been said, that God left the example of Jonah on record, to show that an inconsiderate man is not fit to be

employed in his work; and he chose this one example that it might serve as an endless warning to his church to employ no man in the work of the ministry that is not scripturally acquainted with God's justice and mercy.

CHAPTER XXI.

Micah.

BREVITY OF WRITINGS ARISING FROM HIS CONSTANT ENGAGEMENT IN EXHORTING PUBLICLY; SUBLIMITY OF HIS PASSAGES; THE LORD'S CONTROVERSY.

MICAH, the Morasthite, or of Moresa, a village near the city Eleutheropolis, in the southern part of Judah, is the sixth in order of the twelve minor prophets. He prophesied under Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, for about fifty years. Notwithstanding the length of time he exercised this office, no more of his prophesies have reached posterity than what are contained in his book, nor is there any evidence that any more was written. His time appears to have been spent chiefly in preaching and exhorting; and he was directed to write those parts only that were calculated to profit succeeding generations.

It has been observed that Micah was of the kingdom of Judah, as he only makes mention of kings who reigned over that country.

It is supposed that he prophesied farther on in the reign of Hezekiah than Hosea did; although chapter fifth of his book was written before the captivity of the ten tribes, which happened in the sixth year of this king. It is plain, however, from his writings, that he was sent both to Israel and Judah.

The prophesy of Micah contains but seven chapters.

He foretells the calamities of Samaria, which was taken by Shalmaneser, and reduced to a heap of stones. Afterward he prophesies against Judah and declares the troubles that

Sennacherib should bring upon it, under the reign of Hezekiah. He speaks the captivity of the *ten* tribes, and their return into their own country. The third chapter contains a pathetic invective against the princes of the house of Jacob, and the judges of the house of Israel; which seems leveled against the chief of the kingdom of the former, the judges, the magistrates, the priests, the false prophets, &c.

He upbraids them with their avarice, their injustice and falsehood; and tells them they will be the occasion of Jerusalem being reduced to a "heap of rubbish," and the mountain of the temple as a forest.

We are told this prophecy was pronounced in the reign of Hezekiah; and that it saved Jeremiah from death.

After these terrible denunciations, Micah speaks of the reign of the Messiah, and of the establishment of the christian church. And as the peaceable times which succeeded the return from the Babylonish captivity, and which were a figure of the reign of Christ, were disturbed by a tempest of short continuance, he foretold it in such a manner as agrees very well with what Ezekiel says of the war of Gog against the Jews.

He speaks in particular of the birth of the Messiah; that he was to be born at Bethlehem; and that his dominion was to extend to the utmost parts of the earth.

He says that God should raise seven shepherds, who should reign by the sword over Assyria, and in the land of Nimrod; which Calmet explains of Darius, son of Hystaspes; and of the *seven* confederates that killed the magian, and who possessed the empire of the Persians, after the extinction of the family of Cyrus. The fifth chapter, from verse seventh to the end, describes the flourishing estate of the Jews in their own country, from the reign of Darius, and after the Maccabees; yet in such a manner, that he mingles several things in it that can apply only to the church of Jesus Christ.

First, in the two last chapters of his book, is a long invective against the iniquities of Samaria; then he foretells the fall of Babylon; the reëstablishment of the cities of Israel; the greatness of the country possessed by the Israelites; their

happiness; the graces wherewith God will favor them; and all this in such lofty terms, that they chiefly agree with the christian church.

Some of the prophecies of Micah are distinct and illustrious.

We may justly admire the elegance of his diction, his animation, strength of expression, and pathos. There are few beauties of composition, of which examples may not be found in this prophet.

For sublimity and impressiveness in several places, he is unrivaled.

The *Lord's controversy* is equal to any thing even in the prophet Isaiah, and is calculated to produce a powerful effect on every attentive reader.

Micah, as God's advocate, summons the people into judgment, and makes an appeal to inanimate creation against them. He had spoken to the priests, to the princes, and to the people. He had done every thing that was necessary to make them wise, holy, and happy; they had uniformly disobeyed, and were ever ungrateful. It was not consistent either with the mercy or justice of God, to permit them to go on without reprehension and punishment. He calls them into judgment; and such was the nature of their crimes, that, to heighten the effect, and show what reason he had to punish such a people, he appeals to *inanimate creation*. Their ingratitude and rebellion are sufficient to make the mountains, the hills, and the strong foundations of the earth to hear, tremble, and give judgment against them. Thus did this prophet rebuke and exhort, calling upon God to witness to his fidelity and faithfulness.

CHAPTER XXII.

Nahum.

IMPERFECT KNOWLEDGE OF HIS PERSONAL HISTORY; DIVERS OPINIONS CONCERNING HIM; FORETELLS WITH ACCURACY THE FALL OF NINEVEH.

NAHUM, the seventh of the twelve minor prophets, was a native of Elkoshai, a little village of Galilee, whose ruins were still in being in the time of St. Jerome. However, there are some who think that Elkoshai is rather the name of his father, and that the place of his birth was Bethabor, or Bethabara, beyond Jordan.

They used to show the tomb of the prophet at a village called Beth-gabre, now called Gibbin, near Emmaus. The Chaldee calls him Nahum of Beth-koshi, or of Beth-kitsi; but the situation of this place is as much unknown as that of Elkoshai.

The particular circumstances of the life of Nahum are altogether unknown. His name signifies *comforter;* a very suitable one, as he was sent to comfort the people, by showing them that God was about to destroy their adversaries.

Opinions are divided as to the time in which he prophesied. Josephus will have it that he foretold the fall of Nineveh one hundred and fifteen years before it happened, which will bring the time of Nahum to that of king Ahaz.

The Jews say that he prophesied under Manasseh. It is the opinion of St. Jerome, that he foretold the destruction of Nineveh in the time of Hezekiah, and after the war of Sennacherib in Egypt, mentioned by Berosus.

Nahum speaks plainly of the taking of No-Ammon, a city of Egypt; of the haughtiness of Rabshakeh; of the defeat of Sennacherib; and he speaks of them as things that were past. He supposes that the Jews were still in their own country, and they there celebrated their festivals. He speaks

of the captivity, and of the dispersion of the ten tribes. All these evidences convince us that Nahum can not be placed before the fifteenth year of Hezekiah, since the expedition of Sennacherib against this prince was in the fourteenth year of his reign.

His prophecy consists of three chapters, which make up but one discourse, wherein he foretells the destruction of Nineveh. He describes it in so lovely and pathetic a manner, that he seems to have been upon the spot to declare to the people the destruction of their city.

The conduct and imagery of this prophetical poem are truly admirable. The exordium sets forth with grandeur the justice and power of God, tempered by lenity and goodness.

A sudden address to the Assyrians follows; and a prediction of their perplexity and overthrow, as devisers of evil against the true God. Jehovah himself then proclaims freedom to his people from the Assyrian yoke, and the destruction of the Assyrian idols.

Upon this, the prophet in a most lively manner turns the attention of Judah to the approach of the messenger who brings such glad tidings, and bids her celebrate her festivals, and offer her thank-offerings, without fear of so powerful an adversary.

In the next place, Nineveh is called on to prepare for the approach of her enemies, as instruments in the hands of Jehovah; and the military array and muster of the Medes and Babylonians, their rapid approach to the city, the process of the siege, the capture of the place, the captivity, lamentation, and flight of the inhabitants, the sacking of the wealthy city, and the consequent desolation and terror, are described in the true spirit of eastern poetry, and with many pathetic, vivid, and sublime images.

A grand and animated allegory succeeds this description, which is explained and applied to the city of Nineveh.

The prophet then denounces a woe against the city, for her perfidy and violence, and strongly places before our eyes the number of her chariots and cavalry, her burnished arms, and the great and unrelenting slaughter which she spread around

her. He assigns her idolatries as one cause of her ignominious and unpitied fall.

He foretells that No-Ammon, (the Diospolis in the Delta,) her rival in populousness, confederacies, and situation, should share a like fate with herself, and beautifully illustrates the ease with which her strong holds should be taken, and her pusilanimity during the seige.

He pronounces that all her preparations, her numbers, her opulence, her multitude of chief men, would be of no avail, and that all her tributaries would desert her.

He concludes with a proper epiphonema; the topics of which are, the greatness and incurableness of her wound, and the just triumph of others over her on account of her extensive oppressions.

To sum up all with the decisive judgment of an eminent critic: "Not one of the minor prophets equals the sublimity, genius and spirit of Nahum.

Besides, his prophecy is a perfect poem. The exordium is exceedingly majestic. The *apparatus* for the destruction of Nineveh, and the description of that catastrophe, are painted in the most glowing colors, and are admirably clear and powerful."

The time of this prophet's death is not known.

The Greek meneologies and the Latin martyrologies place his festival on the first of December.

Petrus Natalis places it on the twenty-fourth of the same month, which he says was the day of his death, without acquainting us, however, whence he learned the circumstance.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai.

SPIRIT AND ABILITY OF HABAKKUK; RANK AS A POET; SUBLIMITY OF HIS PRAYER. SPECIAL MISSION OF HAGGAI; HIS FAITHFULNESS. UNCERTAINTY RESTING UPON THE HISTORY OF ZEPHANIAH.

CONCERNING these three prophets, comparatively little is known. What we find in the ancients respecting Habakkuk is eidently fabulous, as well as that which appears in the Apocrypha.

He was probably of the tribe of Simeon, and a native of Beth-zacar. It is very likely that he lived after the destruction of Ninevah, as he speaks of the Chaldeans, but makes no mention of the Assyrians.

He appears also to have prophesied before the Jewish captivity, and therefore, it is thought he may be placed in the reign of Jehoiakim, between the years 606 B. C., and 598 B. C.

Something of his spirit is manifested at the commencement of his prophecy, which he enters upon abruptly and with earnestness, being greatly indignant at the rapid progress of vice and impiety among the people.

The ardor of his expostulation with them, shows how earnestly he desired their welfare to be secured in the only right way,—turning to God.

As a poet, Habakkuk holds a high rank among the Hebrew prophets.

The beautiful connection between the parts of his prophecy, its diction, imagery, spirit and sublimity, can not be too much admired; and his hymn, chapter third, is allowed by the best judges, to be a master-piece of its kind.

In the third verse is a sudden burst of poetry, in the true spirit of the ode; the concealed connection being that God, who had formerly displayed such power in delivering the

Israelites from Egyptian slavery, might succour their posterity in a like wonderful manner.

Hence the prophet selects the most striking facts of the first deliverance; and to decorate and render them impressive, brings forth all the power of his genius, in all the strength and elegance of his language.

What crowns the sublimity of this piece, is the singular eloquence of its close; and were it not that antiquity has here and there thrown its veil of obscurity over it, there could not be conceived a more perfect and masterly poem of its kind.

Leaving its unparalleled *piety* out of the question, it is full of inexpressible beauty and elegance.

The 17th and 18th verses give us the finest display of resignation and confidence often met with.

He knew the word of Jehovah could not fail, and therefore his confidence is unshaken.

Of Zephaniah, who has given us a long list of his ancestors, we know little, because we know nothing *certain* relative to the persons of the family whose names are introduced.

We have one chronological note which is of more value for the correct understanding of his prophecy, than the other could have been, how circumstantially soever it had been delivered, viz.: that he prophesied in the days of Josiah, son of Arnon, king ot Judah; and from the description which he gives of the *disorders* which prevailed in Judea in his time, it is evident that he must have prophesied before the reformation made by Josiah, which was in the eighteenth year of his reign. As he predicts the destruction of Nineveh, which as Calmet remarks could not have taken place before the sixteenth year of the above mentioned king, allowing with Berosus twenty-one years for the reign of Nabopolassar over the Chaldeans; we must, therefore, place his prophecy about the beginning of the reign of Josiah, or from B. C. 640 to B. C. 609.

We know nothing of the parentage of Haggai.

He was probably born in Babylon during the captivity, and appears to have been the first prophet sent to the Jews after their return to their own land.

He was sent particularly to encourage the Jews to proceed with the building of the temple, which had been interrupted for about fourteen years.

Cyrus, who had published an edict empowering the Jews to return to Jerusalem and rebuild their city and temple, revoked this edict in the second year of his reign, through the evil advice of his courtiers, and other enemies of the Jews. After his death Cambyses renewed the prohibition; but after the death of Cambyses, Darius, the son of Hystaspes, renewed the permission; and Haggai was sent to encourage his countrymen to proceed with the work. Darius came to the throne about the year B. C. 521, and published his edict of permission for the Jews to rebuild the city and temple in the second year of his reign, which was the sixteenth of their return from Babylon.

Haggai received his commission on the first day of the month; and on the twenty-fourth day he had so completely succeeded that he had the satisfaction of seeing the whole people engaged heartily in the Lord's work; they left their own houses to build that of the Lord.

Here was a *faithful reprover*, and he found obedient ears; and the Lord's work was done, for the people had a mind to work.

Truly he was the Lord's messenger, and he came with His message, and consequently, he came with authority.

CHAPTER XXIV

Zechariah. Malachi.

AFFIRMATION CONCERNING HIS PRIESTLY TITLE; OBSCURITY OF HIS STYLE; PROPHECY RESPECTING CHRIST. GLORIOUS PREDICTIONS OF MALACHI, LAST OF THE JEWISH PROPHETS.

ECHARIAH, the eleventh of the twelve minor prophets, was son of Berechiah, and grandson of Iddo.

He returned from Babylon with Zerubbabel, and began to prophesy in the second year of the reign of Darius, son of Hystaspes, in the year of the world 3484; before Christ 516; before the vulgar era, 520; in the eighth month of the holy year; and two months after Haggai had begun to prophesy.

These two prophets, with united zeal, encouraged at the same time the people to go on with the work of the temple, which had been discontinued for some years.

The time and place of the birth of Zechariah are unknown. Some will have him to have been born at Babylon, during the captivity; others think he was born at Jerusalem before the tribes of Judah and Benjamin were carried away. Some maintain that he was a priest; but others affirm that he was no priest. Many say that he was the immediate son of Iddo; others believe, with much more reason, that he was son of Berechiah, and grandson of Iddo.

He has been confounded with one Zechariah, son of Barachiah, who lived in the time of Isaiah, and with Zachariah, the father of John the Baptist; which opinion is plainly incongruous. Lastly, he has been thought to be the one whom the Saviour mentions as being killed between the temple and the altar; though no such thing is any where said of our prophet.

A tomb is shown to this day at the foot of the Mount

of Olives, which, it is pretended, belongs to this prophet. Another writer maintains that he was buried in a place called Bethariah, one hundred and fifty furlongs from Jerusalem.

Thus obscure and uncertain is the history of Zechariah. We have, however, his "sure word of prophecy," and that is to be relied upon.

He is the longest and most obscure in his writings of all the minor prophets. His style is interrupted and without connection. His promises concerning the Messiah are more particular and express than those of the others.

He comforts the Jews in re-building the temple, by the assurance of its final completion under the gracious superintendence of Providence; that the all-seeing eye of God would constantly guard his church; and that by his atonement he would procure for it peace and pardon.

He foretells the death of the Messiah, and the subsequent persecution of his disciples.

He gives a very pathetic and affecting account of the deep sorrow of the people, when brought to a sense of their sin in crucifying the Messiah, comparing it to the sorrow of a parent for his first-born and only son: a deep and retired sorrow, which will render the mourners for a season insensible to all the comforts and enjoyments of the most endearing society.

He closes with the promises of a bright day, when "Holiness to the Lord" shall be impressed upon all the works and ways of man.

We come now to Malachi, who is undoubtedly the last of the Jewish prophets. He lived after Zechariah and Haggai; for we find that the *temple*, which was begun in their time, was standing complete in his.

Some have thought he was contemporary with Nehemiah; indeed several have supposed that Malachi is no other than Ezra under the feigned name of *angel of the Lord*, or *my angel.*

According to Archbishop Usher he flourished B. C. 416; but

the authorized version, shows it to have been nineteen years later.

In allusion to the custom of sending pioneers to prepare the way for the march of an eastern monarch, he describes the coming of Christ's forerunner, and then of Christ himself.

With a solemnity becoming the last of the prophets, he closes the sacred canon with enjoining the strict observance of the law till the forerunner already promised should appear, in the spirit of Elijah, to introduce the Messiah, and begin the new and everlasting dispensation, even that of the blessed Gospel.

There are three remarkable predictions in the last chapter of Malachi. 1. The advent of John the Baptist, in the spirit and authority of Elijah. 2. The manifestation of Christ in the flesh, under the emblem of Sun of Righteousness. 3. The final destruction of Jerusalem, represented under the emblem of a burning oven, consuming every thing cast into it. These three prophecies, relating to the most important facts that have ever taken place in the history of the world, announced here nearly four hundred years before their occurrence, have been most circumstantially fulfilled.

From this time till the time of Christ, there seems to have been no more prophetic revelations, John the Baptist furnishing the connecting link between the two—Malachi and Christ.

PART II.

Christ and the Apostles

CHAPTER I.

Life of Christ.

GENERAL DECREE FOR TAXATION; BIRTH OF CHRIST; CIRCUMCISION AND PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE; FLIGHT INTO EGYPT; MASSACRE OF INFANTS AT BETHLEHEM; DEATH OF HEROD, AND JOSEPH'S RETURN.

WHEN Augustus Cæsar, the Roman Emperor, issued an edict for a general taxation on all the nations, cities and towns subject to the empire, king Herod, in consequence of that decree, commanded all under his government to muster in the city of his people, or place of his descent, that an estimate might be taken of their persons and effects. Pursuant to this order, Joseph and Mary, as descendants from the line of David, departed from Nazareth, where they then resided, and came to Bethlehem, a city of Judea, the place of the nativity of David and his ancestors.

So numerous were the people that repaired to this place, on account of the general decree, that every dwelling was occupied; and Joseph and Mary, though they could not depart thence till after the taxation, were forced to take up their residence in a humble stable, the spot in which it pleased the Divine wisdom should be born the Lord of Life and Glory, who, as a perfect example of humility to all his followers, was to make his entrance into, and his exit out of, the lower world in the same mean and humble manner. In this lowly tenement the blessed Virgin brought forth her first-born, God-like son, wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him, (having no better place,) in a manger.

The manner and place of our Lord's birth certainly demand our highest admiration and wonder, as a striking display of wisdom, both in the direction and accomplishment of the will of his heavenly Father. Considered in his Divine nature, heaven is the habitation of his seat, and the

earth is his footstool; considered in his human nature, he is humbled beneath all, being confined within the narrow limits of a manger! though as the Son of God, "he is the brightness of his Father's glory, the express image of his person," and "his throne is forever and ever!" As the son of man, O wondrous condescension! he is wrapped in the meanest swaddling clothes; and as man, he takes up his habitation with the beasts of the field. In fine, let us adore his grace and love in divesting himself of those glories, for a time, which he enjoyed at the right hand of his Father, assuming our nature, and that in its humblest state, in order to raise us to that degree of glory and happiness, which, by our apostacy from God, we had justly forfeited; exulting with the prophet, "Sing, O heavens, and be joyful, O earth, and break forth into singing, O mountains, for the Lord hath comforted his people."

But the humble manner in which the blessed Jesus made his appearance in the world, did not long eclipse the glory of his descent; a heavenly messenger being despatched from above to apprise mankind of their Saviour's incarnation. It pleased the wise Disposer of all things, by this holy angel, first to make known to some honest shepherds who were watching their flocks by night, in the neighboring fields, the birth of the long-promised, long-expected Messiah.

The radiance which shone around them terrified the astonished peasants; but, to dissipate their fears and confirm their joys, the Divine messenger interposed, and thus addressed them: "Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born, this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." The glorious news was no sooner proclaimed, than a number of the celestial choir were heard to resound the praises of the Almighty for this transcendent display of his goodness to sinful men: "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth

peace, good will toward men." Transported with the happy tidings of the birth of the Redeemer of Israel, the angel no sooner departed, than the shepherds hastened to Bethlehem in quest of the babe, whom, according to the information of the sacred missionary, they found wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. This event, so exactly conformable to the angel's prediction, equally delighted and amazed them; nor could they conceal the purport of his mission, but published abroad all they had seen and heard.

After the expiration of eight days from the birth of the holy infant, he was circumcised, according to the Mosaic institution; and thus, by a few drops, gave earnest of the abundance of blood which he was to shed for the purification of mankind. The blessed Redeemer passed through this ceremony, not that he stood in any necessity for conforming to laws of any kind, being the supreme law-giver with respect to his exalted nature; but, as considered in his humble state, "he was born of a woman, made under the law," and came according to his own declaration, "to fulfill all righteousness," it was requisite he should conform to that custom, which characterized the Jewish nation, and was one of the principal injunctions of the Mosaic law, under which he was born; in order to fulfill all that was spoken of him in the Scriptures. Besides, as all the promises made to Abraham were to be fulfilled in the Messiah, it was necessary that he should receive the seal of circumcision, in order to prove his descent from the patriarch, concerning whom it was foretold, "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

As a further reason of our Lord's compliance with this Jewish institution, we may urge the propriety of his finishing the former dispensation by a strict adherence to its rules, as he was about to establish another, and much better, which could not be effected more fully than by conforming to that sacrament, which was of Divine injunction, and indispensably requisite to admission into the former.

As the same institution also required that every first-born son, without any regard to circumstance or family, should

be presented to the Lord, in the temple, by delivering him into the hands of the priest, and paying five shekels, together with an offering, which, from the poorer sort, consisted of a pair of turtle-doves, or two young pigeons; a ceremony in commemoration of the Divine mercy in sparing the first-born in Israel, when those of Egypt, both men and beasts were destroyed; his parents having tarried at Bethlehem till the days of Mary's purification were accomplished, brought the child Jesus to Jerusalem, and there presented him in the temple to the Lord, in the manner just described, with the offering allowed to the poorer sort of people; a repeated instance of the exact obedience of the immaculate Jesus to the ceremonial law, as well as the poverty of his parents, though descended from a royal house.

During the presentation of the holy infant, there entered the temple a pious and venerable old man, named Simeon, who, with all the devout, had "waited day and night for the consolation of Israel," and to whom it had been revealed by the spirit of Truth, that he should not depart this mortal life till he had seen the Lord of life and salvation.

Accordingly it was signified to him by the Holy Ghost, at whose instance he came at the precise time into the temple, that the child there presented was the long-expected Messiah, even the Redeemer of Israel. In an ecstacy of joy he embraced the heavenly infant in his arms, and broke out into this rhapsody: "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people: a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel."

The exultation of Simeon astonished the parents of our Lord; not as unworthy the Divine subject of it, to which are due strains superior either to men or angels, but as evincing the old man's certain knowledge that the child was the promised Messiah, though he was an absolute stranger. But their surprise was soon removed by Simeon's saying unto Mary, his mother, "Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel;" or in other words, this is the

stumbling block and rock of offense, which it was long foretold by God should be laid in Zion, and which should occasion the fall of many in Israel; for through the humble manner of his birth, and his abject state upon earth, he became despised and rejected of men; yet he is set for the rising again of many, who shall rely upon his merits, and submit to his government.

A certain good prophetess, called Anna, who had for a long time waited for the redemption of Israel, entering the temple at the instant in which Simeon exulted in the birth of the heavenly infant, and finding that he was the promised Messiah, likewise joined with him in praising God, and went forth and declared the glad tidings of salvation to all the faithful in those parts.

Having, in every respect, complied with the ceremonies and rites contained in the law of Moses, Joseph and Mary, with the child Jesus, entered into Galilee, to their own city, Nazareth, but did not long abide there; for having adjusted their affairs, they returned again to Bethlehem, the place of our Lord's nativity.

This step seems to have been pursued in consequence of their opinion that it was necessary, in order to his being acknowledged the Messiah, sent by God, that he should reside, some time, in the place of his birth.

Whatever was their motive for a removal, it is evident, from Scripture, that while they were in Bethlehem with their son, certain eastern philosophers, called magi, or wise men, came, in consequence of the appearance they had seen, to Jerusalem, and inquired for the King of the Jews; declaring they had seen his star in their own quarter, and were come to pay him the adorations due to his dignity.

The whole city of Jerusalem was alarmed at the unexpected arrival of the eastern magi; an event which much perplexed the tyrant Herod, whose ambitious mind maintained the utmost aversion to the very thought of a rival or competitor, and consequently could not brook a report that favored the news of the birth of a king of the Jews.

Disguising, however, his sentiments, he received the magi

with seeming respect, attended to the design of their errand with affected simplicity, and, to gratify their curiosity, summoned a general council, and demanded of them where Christ should be born. The council kept him not long in suspense, for well remembering that the prophets had particularly foretold the place of his birth, they replied to the demand of their monarch, "In Bethlehem of Judea;" and to confirm their answer, cited prophetic authority: "And thou, Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda; for out of thee shall come a governor that shall rule my people Israel."

The tyrant king, in consequence of the reply from the supreme council of the nation, directed the magi to Bethlehem, as the place, according to ancient prophecy, designed for the honor of Christ's nativity, earnestly entreating them, at the same time, immediately, on their finding out the child, to send him word, that he might repair thither, and pay his adoration to him also.

But this was mere pretense, and vile hypocrisy; for so far was Herod from entertaining any religious regard for the infant Jesus, that he vowed in his heart to destroy him as soon as he should be found; looking on him as designed for a temporal prince, who would expel him, or his descendants, from the throne of Judea, instead of a prince whose kingdom was wholly spiritual, and whose throne was not to be established upon earth, but in the heavenly Jerusalem.

We can not have a more convincing proof of the divinity of our Saviour's mission, than his miraculous preservation from the designs of the ambitious Herod. The tyrant, in this case, acted with the utmost subtility; he declined accompanying the wise men in person; nor did he even send attendants with them, who, under the guise of honoring them, might have secretly informed him of the abode of the Messiah.

However, the magi, having obtained the intelligence they sought in Jerusalem, set forward, under the guidance of the same star that conducted them from their own country, but had left them on their arrival in Judea, which was the cause

of their directing their course to the capital, in order to seek that information, which, by the desertion of the star, became requisite. Thus it appears the design of the Almighty, in directing the eastern magi to the capital of Judea, was, that the whole nation might be made acquainted with the cause of their journey.

Accordingly, they had no sooner proceeded from Jerusalem, on their way to Bethlehem, than their kind conductor again appeared, went before them to the very city, and fixed on the habitation of the heavenly infant.

Guided by this celestial conductor, they entered the house, and prostrating themselves at the sacred feet of their spiritual king, presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Having thus accomplished the design of their expedition, they proposed, according to promise, returning to Jerusalem; but being diverted from that intention by a dream, in which they were warned by God of Herod's design, they pursued another course, toward their own country, and by those means defeated his malicious purposes.

No sooner had the wise men departed from Bethlehem, than Joseph was warned by a heavenly messenger of the barbarous purpose of Herod, and commanded to flee into Egypt, with the young child and his mother.

Joseph, in obedience to the Almighty's command, rose that very night, and fled into Egypt; and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord, by the prophet: "Out of Egypt have I called my son."

The king of Judea long waited, with the most earnest expectation, the return of the wise men, anxious to glut his full resentment on the innocent Jesus; till from their long delay, he began to suspect a delusion, and that his designs were frustrated by some extraordinary interposition of Providence.

At length, irritated by disappointment, he resolved to accomplish by cruelty, a resolution he could not effect by art, and accordingly issued orders to a large party of soldiers to go throughout Bethlehem, and all the neighboring villages, and massacre all the children they could find therein that

were two years old and under; thinking that the infant Jesus, whom, as a prince, he both envied and dreaded, would fall in the general slaughter.

But the heavenly missionary was sheltered from above; nor was the relentless king permitted to impede the design of an Almighty Creator.

The tyrant Herod being cut off from the face of the earth, Joseph was warned by an heavenly messenger to return to the land of Israel.

The good old man obeyed the Almighty's command, and appears to have had a great desire of residing in Judea, and very probably in Bethlehem; but hearing that Herod was succeeded in his throne by his son Archelaus, and fearing that he might pursue the barbarous designs of his father, he directed his course another way; but being warned again by a heavenly mission, he retired into Galilee, under the government of a mild and benevolent prince, called Antipas, and took up his habitation at Nazareth, where the particular circumstances which attended the birth of the blessed Jesus were not generally known.

The evangelist affirms that Joseph, with the infant and his mother, resided at Nazareth, where the holy Jesus spent his youth; "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, He shall be called a Nazarene."

CHAPTER II.

EARLY CHILDHOOD OF JESUS; ARGUMENT WITH JEWISH DOCTORS; BAPTISM AND VISIBLE DESCENT OF THE SPIRIT UPON HIM; TEMPTATION IN THE WILDERNESS; HIS FIRST MIRACLE.

THE precise circumstances of our Lord's childhood and life previous to his public ministry, can not be ascertained from the writings of any of the evangelists, which can alone be relied on as authentic. All we can gather from those inspired men is, that the faculties of his mind were enlarged in pro-

portion to the growth of his body, insomuch that he arrived at the very perfection of heavenly wisdom.

As his parents were mean and poor, he had not the advantage of a finished education; and he seems to have received no other instruction than what his parents gave him, in conformity to the Jewish laws. But supernatural abilities amply compensated for the deficiency of natural acquirements, and he gave instances in his earliest years of amazing penetration, and consummate wisdom.

According to the Mosaic institution, his parents annually went up to Jerusalem; and when he arrived at the age of twelve years, carried him with them to that city, in order that he might early imbibe the precepts of religion and virtue.

In this place the holy Jesus tarried, without the knowledge and consent of his parents, who departed with the rest that were going toward Galilee; and thinking that he was gone forward with some of their relations or acquaintance, they continued their journey, not doubting but they should overtake him on the road, or meet with him at the place they had appointed to lodge. But on their arrival, not finding the child in the village, nor among their relations, they returned to Jerusalem, much troubled, and after a most anxious search of three days, found him in the temple, sitting among the learned doctors, who were amazed at the wisdom of his questions, and the pertinence of his replies, which were greatly superior to the utmost they could expect from one of his tender years and mean education.

The wonder of his parents at finding him in such sublime employment, was beyond expression; though his pious mother, notwithstanding the pleasure which the discovery afforded her, could not help showing the concern which his absence without their knowledge had occasioned them, by addressing them thus: "Son, why hast thou dealt so with us?" To this question he replied, that their suprise at his absenting himself without their knowledge was groundless and absurd, as they might have been assured from his extraordinary birth, and the wonderful circumstances attending

it, that his Father was no less than the Almighty One of Israel; that he assumed human nature to promote his glorious design; and, therefore, as his errand was of such moment, they must not imagine he could always reside with them. "How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"

Though his parents did not clearly discern the force of this excellent remonstrance, his pious mother committed his words to memory, and, together with Joseph, joyfully returned with him to their poor dwelling at Nazareth, where he lived with them in dutiful subjection, and thereby afforded a noble example for the imitation of all children, who are certainly bound to yield obedience to their parents, since the Son of God himself, when on earth, has set them the pattern by practicing every branch of filial duty to his earthly parents.

The blessed Jesus continued in this lowly state for some time, during which he greatly advanced, both in knowledge and stature; and by his extraordinary qualities, attracted the regard and admiration of all who either saw or heard him.

Being happily free from those inordinate disquieting desires which disturb and distract mortals, he was always in temper calm and sedate, which, added to a pleasant countenance, combined to improve the strength of his faculties, and the goodness of his disposition.

He was also an excellent orator, being endowed with a most nervous and persuasive elocution, insomuch that his hearers, frequently astonished at the substance and manner of his address, would suddenly cry out, "Never man spake like this man!"

Though considered in his Divine nature, he was so far superior to human nature, during the time in which he lived thus humbly with his parents, yet he condescended to work with his father at his trade of a carpenter, and thereby left us a shining example of industry.

Thus obscurely did the blessed Jesus live, till the time of his public ministry; nor did he show any miracles, or perform any actions, to distinguish him from the rest of.

mankind; his Divine nature and the annexed properties, during the time of his private life, being concealed under the veil of his human nature.

During the time of John the Baptist's continuance at Bethabara, the blessed Jesus left his retirement at Nazareth, and previous to his public ministry, repaired to the banks of the river Jordan, where John was executing his commission from above, in order to be there baptized of him.

We can not impute this conduct of our Lord to any necessity there was for his conforming to the institution of baptism, for *purity* needs not cleansing; it is therefore evident that his motive was to add a sanction to that ordinance, forever after appointed to be the initiating rite of christianity.—"Go, baptize all nations," &c.

It appears that John immediately, as it were, by a prophetic revelation, knew the Saviour of the world; for we find, from the evangelist, that he acknowledged his superiority, and declined the office, saying, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" Our Lord's answer, though short, is very full and expressive: "Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." As if he had said, regard not the precedence, at this time, but perform thy work; for it is necessary that we should, in the minutest point, conform to the Divine will, by which this institution is enjoined.

This remonstrance removed the objections of John, and he baptized the immaculate Jesus, in the river Jordan, in the presence of numerous spectators.

When the ceremony was performed, as he needed not the instructions usually given on the occasion, he went up straightway out of the water, and kneeling on the bank of the river, fervently addressed his Almighty Father, for an abundant effusion of his Holy Spirit, as he was now entering on his public ministry, the prelude of his important mission, the end of which was the salvation of all mankind.

His prayer was heard, his request was granted; and an immediate attestation of the Divine pleasure given by a visible ray of glory around him, and an audible voice pro-

ceeding from the Holy Spirit, in the form of a dove, and pronouncing these words, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," distinguishing his peculiar approbation of the blessed Jesus by the epithet *beloved*, as well as his standing in that relation to him in a manner nearer than any of the human race, who are called, in common, the sons of men.

This voice resembled not any human sound; but was loud and awful, like the thunders of heaven, in order to strike with reverence the surrounding multitude, and publicly declare the holy mission of the promised Messiah.

The blessed Jesus was called, in the Old Testament, the Son of God, but was on this occasion, declared, by the Almighty himself, to be the long expected deliverer of Israel.

Thus, all who were present at this marvelous descent of the Holy Spirit, were amply convinced of the divine mission of our blessed Lord by an infallible testimony from above; this being "the star that was to come out of Jacob, and the sceptre that was to rise out of Israel;" the *Shiloh* foretold by the patriarch Jacob; the *Great Prophet*, by Moses; the *Holy One*, by David; the *Prince of Peace*, by Isaiah, and the Son of Man. But this remarkable event tended much more to the glory of the Messiah, than all those prophecies, as it was, in some measure, a real display of what they could only picture in the dark.

The Great Redeemer having thus complied with the institution of baptism, and received a most convincing testimony of his heavenly Father's approbation, by the miraculous descent and effusion of the Holy Ghost upon him, while praying upon the banks of Jordan, in the presence of a multitude of spectators, entered on his public ministry, at the age of thirty years, according to the usual custom of the priests among the Jews.

It was apprehended by the people that, as he had but just begun his public office, he would repair to Jerusalem, the seat of power and grandeur, in order to display to the mighty and learned, his miraculous abilities, and effulgent glories. But averse to human parade, the heavenly-minded Jesus

preferred solitude to the noise and hurry of mortal life; he therefore retired into the wilderness, in order to prepare himself, by fasting, meditation, prayer, and sustaining temptation, for the important work on which he was entering,—the salvation of mankind.

To promote this grand design, the evangelists write, that this retirement into the wilderness was in consequence of the immediate direction of the Divine Spirit. Though solitude itself is melancholy, the blessed Jesus added to the dismal scene, by retiring on a barren spot, surrounded by high and craggy mountains, and forming a dark and gloomy chaos.

In this wild and dreary situation, the great Redeemer, as Moses and Elijah had done before him, fasted forty days and forty nights, maintained an incessant communion with his heavenly Father, digested the doctrine he was about to deliver, and the obedience he came to perform; and by a total abstinence from food for forty days and forty nights, evinced the divinity of his mission, or, in other words, proved that he was "a teacher from God."

But the melancholy solitude of a desert, and the extreme of hunger and thirst, were but a small part of our Saviour's sufferings in the wilderness: Satan, that implacable foe to mankind, was permitted to buffet him with the most insinuating wiles, and assail him with the most alluring temptations, in order to attempt the defeat of heaven's most gracious designs and keep mankind under the dreadful dominion of sin and death.

That in order to be a shining pattern of every virtue, and also a wise and valiant general, the blessed Redeemer underwent all the difficulties attending his service, that we, being animated by his glorious example, might not sink under the pressure and troubles, which God, for our good, should be pleased to lay upon us.

At the expiration of forty days, when the blessed Jesus had endured the keenest hunger, the tempter, to make proof of the divinity of his mission, insolently demanded why he bore the sensations of hunger, since, if he was the Son of God, he must have power to change even the stones of that

dreary wilderness into bread; and by so marvelous a transmutation, he might have the satisfaction of knowing the truth of what was said concerning him at his baptism.

But our blessed Saviour repelled this device, by citing the words of Moses, which implied that God, whenever it seemed good in his sight, could by extraordinary means provide for the support of the human race: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God."

Satan being defeated in this effort, took him to the top of a very high mountain, and thinking to work upon him by another artifice, showed him a bright view of all the kingdoms of the world, with their alluring glories, promising him universal empire over the whole, if he would bow down and yield to him the honor of the benefaction.

This blasphemy, as well as insolence, incited the blessed Jesus to exert his divine authority, and command him, in a peremptory manner, to desist,—citing this special injunction from sacred writ, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

Thus repelled, he repeated the attempt, and having taken our Lord to Jerusalem, placed him on a pinnacle of the temple, and, by a taunt of insolence, urged him to prove the truth of his mission, by casting himself down from thence,—citing, as an encouragement for him to comply with his desire, a text from the Psalms: "If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down; for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone."

But our Saviour soon baffled this attempt, by another apt quotation from Scripture: "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

Thus baffled in all his arts and devices, by the wisdom and power of the Son of God, he departed from him, and a host of celestial spirits, despatched from the regions of bliss, came and ministered refreshment to our Saviour, after his victory over the great enemy and deceiver of mankind.

After a brief period, during which, the great Redeemer, having attested the divinity of his mission by many incon-

testible evidences, and made five disciples, departed for Galilee, where, soon after his arrival, he was invited, with his mother and disciples, to a marriage feast at Cana, a place near Nazareth.

At these nuptials there happened to be a scarcity of wine, and his mother, who interested herself in the conduct of the feast, and was therefore desirous that every thing should be done with decorum, applied to her son, hoping he would be able to remedy the defect.

She had, doubtless, conceived he had the power of working miracles, and, addressing herself to him, said, "They have no wine." Our Lord gently reproved her in these words: "Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come;" that is, the time or period of my public ministry is not yet arrived, nor is it time for me to display my supernatural powers.

Notwithstanding this mild reproof, his mother still entertained an opinion that he would interest himself in behalf of her and the company, and therefore ordered the servants punctually to obey his commands.

Our blessed Lord, being assured that working a miracle would greatly tend to confirm the faith of his young disciples, exerted his divine power, by ordering the servants to fill six water-pots, each containing about twenty gallons, with water; which was no sooner done, than the whole was converted into excellent wine. He then ordered them to draw, and bear to the governor of the feast, who, being ignorant of the miracle that had been wrought, and astonished at the preference of this wine to that which had been served up at the beginning of the feast, addressed himself to the bridegroom, in the hearing of the whole company, telling him that, contrary to the usual custom, he had reserved the best wine to the last; at the same time commending so judicious a practice, as a plain proof of his approbation of his friends present at the entertainment.

The bridegroom was equally surprised at the address of the governor of the feast, and the occasion of it, which was effected by the supernatural power of our blessed Lord

This miracle, which was the first wrought by Jesus, confirmed the faith of his followers, and spread his renown throughout the adjacent country.

The blessed Jesus having thus, by divers means, confirmed the faith of his disciples, and attested the truth and divinity of his mission among those with whom he had been brought up, departed from Cana, and proceeded toward Jerusalem, in order to keep the approaching passover.

CHAPTER III.

DISPUTE WITH NICODEMUS; BAPTIZES IN JUDEA; INSTRUCTS A POOR SAMARITAN WOMAN; HEALS THE NOBLEMAN'S SON; PREACHES TO A NUMEROUS AUDIENCE, HIS WELL KNOWN SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

UR blessed Lord, immediately on his arrival at Jerusalem, repaired to the temple, where he was shocked at beholding a place dedicated to the solemn service of Almighty God, so prostituted to purposes of fraud and avarice, and become the resort of traders of every kind. Such abuse could not long escape his notice or correction, having an absolute right to chastise so flagrant a perversion of a place that, strictly speaking, was his own. "The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple; even the Messenger of the Covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts."

Accordingly, the blessed Jesus, whose pious soul was vexed at their profanation of the sacred place, drove out the traders, and overset the tables of the money-changers, saying unto them that sold doves, "Take these things hence: make not my Father's house a house of merchandise."

These mercenary wretches appear to have been struck at once with a consciousness of their guilt, and the severity of our Lord's reproof, as they immediately departed, without making the least resistance.

But our Lord's conduct in this affair, carrying with it every token of zeal, for which the ancient prophets were so remarkable, the council assembled, and determined to inquire by what authority he attempted such a reformation, requiring, at the same time, demonstrative proof of the divinity of his commission. To gratify their curiosity, our blessed Lord referred them only to the miracle of his own resurrection: "Destroy," said he, laying his hand on his breast, "this temple, and I will raise it up in three days." The rulers, mistaking his meaning, imagined that he referred to the superb and lofty temple finished by Herod, and therefore told him such a relation was highly improbable; nor had they the least reason to think he could possibly rebuild, in three days, that magnificent structure, which had been finished at immense expense, and was the labor of so many (forty-six) years.

Though the blessed Jesus declined compliance with the request of the mighty and noble, among the inhabitants of Jerusalem, he wrought several miracles in the presence of the common people, in order to confirm the doctrines he delivered, and prove the divinity of his mission.

As there had not been any miracles wrought among them for a considerable time, though many were recorded in their sacred books, they beheld Jesus with amazement and veneration; and numbers were satisfied that he was the long-promised Messiah, the desired of all nations, so often foretold by the prophets. For wise reasons, however, he did not publicly discover that he was the *Great Prophet*, as he knew that the faith of numbers was yet but weak, and that consequently, many would desert his cause when they found he was opposed by the Sanhedrim, or great council of the nation, and did not set up a worldly kingdom, as they thought the expected Messiah would do.

But the miracles wrought by the holy Jesus did not excite the wonder and astonishment of the common and illiterate class of people alone.

Nicodemus, a principal person among them, on impartial reflection on his wondrous works, so astonishing in their

nature, so demonstrative in their proofs, so salutary in their effects, so happily adapted to the confirmation of his doctrines, and so perfectly agreeable to the attributes of the Deity, as well as the predictions of the ancient prophets, concerning the Messiah, "the Sun of Righteousness, who was to rise with healing in his wings," was perfectly assured that nothing less than Omnipotence itself could produce such wonders; and thence, like many others of his countrymen, concluded that Jesus of a truth was the Son, and sent of God, which last term is the meaning of the word Messiah.

But scruples still arose in his mind; therefore, to obviate which, and solve these perplexing doubts, Nicodemus resolved on an interview with the blessed Jesus; but choosing to conceal his visit from the other members of the Sanhedrim, who were greatly averse to his person and doctrine, he chose the night as most convenient for that purpose.

His salutation of the mighty Redeemer of Israel was this: "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do the miracles that thou doest, except God be with him."

The Saviour, waving all formality and circumlocution, which tend to no real profit, immediately preaches to this noted Rabbi the first great doctrine of christianity, by unfolding the mysterious system of *Regeneration.*

The Divine Preacher, who spake as no man ever spake, likewise labors to eradicate the favorite principle of the Jews, —I mean that of confining all blessings, temporal and eternal, to their own nation and people,—as well as to show the vanity of their expecting the appearance of the Messiah in pomp and magnificence.

To effect this glorious design, he lays open to the Rabbi, that it was agreeable both to the doctrines of Moses, as well as the will of God, that the Redeemer, in this state of mortality, should be exposed to poverty and distress of every kind; that his conquests were not to be of a temporal nature, over the hearts and wills of men; that his throne was not to be established in the earthly, but the heavenly Jerusalem; previous to which, he was to shed his blood, as, by virtue of

the same, all, of every nation and kingdom throughout the earth, might pass into the heavenly world, and there for ever enjoy that perfection of bliss, which, through his sufferings, was provided for them by God himself, to all eternity.

This is the sum and substance of christianity; this is the sum and substance of what our blessed Lord preached to Nicodemus, that great ruler and teacher of the Jews,—a sermon comprehending the whole of what is necessary to be taught, notwithstanding religion is at this day rent to pieces by sectaries, each of which invent some new-fangled doctrine, suggested by ignorance or presumption, or both united.

It appears from the future conduct of Nicodemus, that instead of supposing that Jesus was merely a teacher come from God, he was fully convinced that he was the Messiah, the Redeemer of Israel, for he afterward constantly espoused his cause in the great council of the nation; and when his countrymen put him to an ignominious death, he, together with Joseph of Arimathea, conveyed him to burial, when all others had forsaken him.

The time of the passover at Jerusalem being expired, Jesus, together with his disciples, withdrew into the remote parts of Judea, where he continued a considerable time, preaching the kingdom of God, and baptizing the new converts.

Great numbers resorted to him, attracted by curiosity, to see the great miracles which fame reported he daily wrought. The success of his ministry exciting the envy of the hypocritical tribe of Pharisees, our blessed Lord thought proper to retire into Galilee, in order to promote the design of his mission in those parts.

In the course of his journey, being weary with traveling in so warm a country, and very thirsty, he sat down in Samaria, by a celebrated well, given by the old patriarch, Jacob, to his son Joseph, while his disciples were gone to the city to procure provisions.

While the humble Jesus sat by the well-side, a woman, a native of the country, came with her pitcher to fetch water, and our Lord requested of her to give him to drink. The

appearance of Jesus astonished the woman, because she knew him to be a Jew, and the Samaritans were held in the utmost contempt by those people, who, indeed, arrogated a preference to all nations upon earth. But, though she knew him to be a Jew, she knew not that he was the Son of God, full of grace and truth, divested of human prejudices, and the very essence of humility and every virtue.

As the design of his mission and incarnation was to promote the real happiness of mankind, he embraced every opportunity of enforcing his salutary doctrines, and therefore, though his thirst was extreme, he delayed its gratification, in order to inform this woman, though of an infamous character, of the means by which she might obtain living water, or, in other words, eternal life.

As the best method to effect this purpose, he gave her to understand that, had she known the character of the supplicant, she would have eagerly satisfied his desire, and been rewarded by a gift the most invaluable, even living water, issuing from the well of eternal salvation.

The woman, taking his words in the common acceptation, imagining that he suggested his power of supplying her with water flowing from a perpetual spring, which, in that parched climate appeared impossible, demanded of him if he was vested with a power superior to their father, Jacob, who dug this well, drank out of it with his family, and left it for the benefit of posterity.

The Saviour and friend of mankind, still benign in his purpose toward this poor sinner, replied, "That all who drank of the water of Jacob's well would thirst again, being but a temporary allay of a desire incident to human nature; whereas those who drank of the water which he was ready to dispense, should never thirst; because that water flowed from the inexhaustible fountain of Divine grace, and could not be drained but with immensity itself."

While Jesus continued talking with the woman, his disiples returned, and approached him at the very time when he told the woman that he was the Messiah.

Though they were astonished at his condescension in con-

versing with an inhabitant of Samaria, and even of instructing her in the doctrines of religion, none presumed to ask him why he conversed with one who was an enemy to the Jews, and of the temple at Jerusalem. But the woman, hearing Jesus call himself the Messiah, left her pitcher, and went into the city, to publish the glad tidings, that the great Deliverer of mankind was then sitting by the well of Jacob, and had told her all the secret transactions of her life.

Many of the people were so affected at the words of the woman, that they were fully pursuaded that Jesus could be no other than the great Messiah; accordingly their first request was, that he would deign to take up his residence in their city; the compassionate Redeemer of the human race so far complied, as to stay with them two days, an interval which he spent in preaching to them the kingdom of God; so that the greatest part of the city embraced the doctrine of the gospel, and, at his departure, said unto the woman, "Now we believe; not because of thy saying, for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world."

Having accomplished his gracious design in Samaria, Jesus continued his journey to Galilee, to exercise his ministry, and preach there the kingdom of God; telling his disciples that the time was now accomplished which had long been predetermined by Omnipotence for erecting the happy kingdom of the Prince of Peace, the Mosaic ceremonies being no longer obligatory.

Our Lord had performed several miracles at Jerusalem during the passover, at which the inhabitants of Galilee were present. His preaching was, therefore, at first, attended with great success; for they listened attentively to his doctrine, and received it with great kindness and courtesy, especially the people of Cana, where he had turned the water into wine.

During his residence in that city, a nobleman of Capernaum came to him, requesting, with great humility and reverence, that he would come and heal his son, who was at the point of death. Our blessed Saviour readily complied

with the latter part of this request, but to remove a prejudice they had conceived, that it was necessary to be personally present in order to restore the sick person to health, refused to go down to Capernaum, dismissing the father with this assurance that his son was restored to health, "Go thy way; thy son liveth."

The nobleman obeyed the word of Jesus, and immediately departed to his own house; but before his arrival, he was met by his servants with the joyful news that his son was recovered. On this, the father inquired at what time they perceived an alteration for the better; and from their answer, was satisfied that immediately after the words were spoken by Jesus, the fever left him, and he was recovered in a miraculous manner.

This amazing instance of his power and goodness abundantly convinced the nobleman and his family that Jesus was the true Messiah, the great prophet so long promised to the world.

After some stay in the city and neighborhood of Cana, Jesus went to Nazareth, where he had spent the greatest part of his youth, and, as his custom was, went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and read that celebrated prediction of the Messiah by the prophet Isaiah: "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

It should be remembered that our blessed Saviour read this passage in the original Hebrew, which was then a dead language, and as he had never been taught letters, could do it only by inspiration from above. But he did more: he explained the passage with such strength of reason and beauty of expression, that the inhabitants of Nazareth, who well knew he had never been initiated into the rudiments of learning, heard him with astonishment. But as he had performed no miracle in that city, they were offended at him.

Perhaps they thought the place of his residence should

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have been his peculiar care; and as he could with a single word heal the sick at a distance, not a single person in Nazareth should have been afflicted with any kind of disease.

That they really entertained sentiments of this kind, seems plain from our Saviour's own words: "Ye will surely say to me, Physician, heal thyself; whatever thou hast done in Capernaum, do also here in thy own country;" evidently alluding to the great and benevolent miracle he had wrought on the nobleman's son.

But the holy Jesus, by enumerating the miracles Elijah had done in behalf of the widow of Sarepta, who was a heathen, and the inhabitant of an idolatrous city, in the time of famine, when many widows in Israel perished with hunger; and of Naaman the Syrian, who was cured of his leprosy by the prophet Elisha, when numbers of Jews, afflicted with the same loathsome disease, were suffered to remain in their uncleanness, sufficiently proved that the prophets had on some extraordinary occasions wrought miracles in favor of those whom the Israelites, from a fond conceit of their being the peculiar favorites of heaven, judged unworthy of such marks of peculiar favor. The council were so incensed at this reply, that, forgetting the sanctity of the Sabbath, they hurried him through the streets, "to the brow of the hill whereon the city was built," intending to cast him headlong down the precipice; but the Son of God defeated their cruel intentions, by miraculously rendering himself invisible, and thus withdrawing from the fury of these wretched people.

The holy Jesus, aggrieved by the cruel Nazarenes, departed from them, and visited Capernaum, the capital of Galilee, which, from being built on the borders of the lake of Genesareth, was a place highly convenient for his designs; for besides the numerous inhabitants of that city, the trading towns on the lake were crowded with strangers, who, after hearing the doctrine of the gospel preached by the great Redeemer of mankind, could not fail to spread, in their respective countries, the happy tidings of salvation.

If any should inquire why he preferred Capernaum, we reply, because he was certain of being favorably received by

the inhabitants of that city. He had gained the friendship of the principal family, by restoring to health a favorite child, who, to all human appearance, was just sinking into the chambers of the grave. Nor was this family the only friends he had in that city: so stupendous a miracle could not fail of procuring the love and esteem of all the relations of that noble family; besides, so surprising and benevolent a miracle must have conciliated the respect of all the inhabitants of Capernaum, who could not be ignorant of so remarkable an event.

And, accordingly, our Saviour spent here, and in other places bordering on the lake, a great part of the time of his public life; so that the inhabitants of these parts enjoyed a considerable share of the blessed company and divine instructions of the Son of God.

While he tarried at this place, he usually taught in the synagogues on the Sabbath day, preaching with such energy of power, as greatly astonished the whole congregation.

He did not, however, constantly confine himself to that city; the adjacent country was often blessed with his presence, and cheered with the heavenly words of his mouth.

The multitudes which flocked to him from every quarter, moved his compassion toward those who were bewildered in the darkness of ignorance, and determined him to preach to them "the words of eternal life."

For this blessed purpose he ascended a mountain in the neighborhood, and placing himself on an eminence, from whence he could be heard by the throngs of people attending him, he inculcated, in an amazingly pathetic manner the most important points of religion.

He opened his excellent sermon with the doctrine of happiness; a subject which the teachers of wisdom have always considered as the principal object in morals, and employed their utmost abilities to convey a clear idea of it to their disciples, but differed very remarkably with regard to the particulars in which it consisted.

The Jews, in general, were persuaded that the enjoyments of sense were the sovereign good, and even some of the

disciples themselves for a time retained the notion that a golden, instead of a sceptre of righteousness, would be the sceptre of the Redeemer's kingdom.

Our Lord and Master, therefore, in order to show his hearers in general, and his disciples in particular, the grossness of their error, declared that the highest happiness of man consisted in the favor and image of God; that these will make men unspeakably happy, even in tribulation. You congratulate the rich and the great, said the great Redeemer, but "blessed are the poor in spirit," those humble souls that, deeply conscious of their guilt and ignorance, can quietly yield to Divine teachings and Divine disposals; for however they may be disposed, "theirs is the kingdom of Heaven."

You admire the gay and jovial part of mankind, and please yourselves with the hopes of joy and festivity; but I say unto you, "blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."

Having shown in what true happiness consisted, our Saviour addressed himself to his disciples, and explained their duty as the teachers appointed to guide others in the paths that lead to eternal felicity; exciting them to diligence in dispensing the salutary influences of their doctrine and example, that their hearers might honor and praise the great Creator of heaven and earth, who had been so kind to the children of men.

As his definition of happiness was very different from what the Jews were accustomed to hear from the Scribes and Pharisees, he thought proper to declare, that he was not come to destroy the moral precepts contained in the law or the prophets, but to fulfill or confirm them.

Nothing is so steadfast as the eternal truths of morality; the heavens may pass away, and the whole frame of nature be dissolved, but the rule of righteousness shall remain immutable and immortal. And, therefore, he ordered his disciples, on the severest penalties, to enforce, both by preaching and example, the strict observance of all the moral precepts contained in the sacred writings; and that

in a much greater latitude than they were taken by the teachers of Israel. And in consideration of the frailties of human nature, taught them that excellent form of prayer, which has been used by christians of all denominations to this very day,—the *Lord's Prayer.*

Heavenly-mindedness was the next thing inculcated by the blessed Jesus; and this he recommended with a peculiar earnestness, because the Jewish doctors were in general strangers to this virtue, in which he was desirous his followers should be clothed, as being the most excellent ornament for a teacher of righteousness.

Lest they should imagine it was possible to be both heavenly-minded and covetous at the same time, he assured them that this was full as absurd as to imagine a person could, at the same time, serve two masters of opposite characters. "No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye can not serve God and mammon."

Having enforced these and many other heavenly precepts, he exhorted them to place an humble dependence on the assistance of the Holy Spirit, to strive to practice the precepts of religion, however difficult the task might appear.

He then closed his sermon with the parable of the houses built on different foundations; intimating that the bare knowledge, or the simple hearing of the divinest lessons of the truth ever delivered—nay, even the belief of these instructions, without the practice of them—is of no manner of importance.

The way of life which our blessed Redeemer has marked out for us, in such precepts as those in the *sermon on the Mount*, may, indeed, to corrupt nature, appear rugged and narrow, and the gate straight through which we are to pass; but let us encourage ourselves against all difficulties, by considering that immortal life and glory to which they infallibly lead.

Then shall we, doubtless, prefer the most painful way of

piety and virtue, though with yet fewer companions than we might reasonably expect, to all those flowery and frequented paths of vice, which lead to the chambers of death.

CHAPTER IV.

CURES THE LEPROSY AND PALSY; CASTS OUT A DEVIL; CONFIRMS HIS MISSION BY PRODUCING A MIRACULOUS DRAUGHT OF FISHES; STILLS THE BOISTEROUS WAVES; CHOOSES HIS TWELVE DISCIPLES TO BE HIS COMPANIONS.

FTER finishing his excellent discourse, the great Preacher of Israel came down from the mountain, surrounded by a multitude of people, who had listened with astonishment to the doctrines he delivered, which were soon confirmed by divers miracles.

A leper met him in his way to Capernaum, and being doubtless acquainted with the wondrous works he had already performed, threw himself with great humility before the Son of God, using this remarkable expression: "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean."

The species of leprosy common among the Jews, and other eastern nations, was equally nauseous and infectious; but this was so far from preventing the blessed Jesus from approaching so loathsome an object, that it increased his pity; he even touched him; but instead of being polluted himself, the leper was instantly cleansed, and he departed, glorifying God.

The evangelist adds, that Jesus forbade him to tell any person what had been done, but repair immediately to the priest, and offer the gift commanded by Moses.

Having performed the cure on the leper, our blessed Jesus proceeded to Capernaum; but as he entered the city, he was met by a Roman centurion, who represented to him, in the most pathetic manner, the deplorable condition of his servant, who was grievously afflicted with a palsy. The com-

passionate Redeemer of the world listened attentively to his complaint, and immediately told him he would come and heal him.

The centurion thought this too great a condescension to one who was not of the seed of Jacob, and therefore told him he did not mean that he should give himself the trouble of going to his house, which was an honor he had not the least reason to expect, being confident that his word alone would be sufficient; disease and devils being as much subject to his command, as his soldiers were to him.

Our Lord was not ignorant of the centurion's faith, or the basis on which it was built; he well knew the thoughts of his heart, long before he uttered his request; and to make his faith the more conspicuous, he gave it the praise it so justly deserved: "Verily, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith—no, not in all Israel."

This exalted faith induced the blessed Jesus to declare the gracious intentions of the Almighty Father with regard to the Gentiles,—namely: that he would as readily accept their faith as that of the Jews, and place them with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; while those who boasted of being the offspring of these great patriarchs, but fell far short of the heathens in faith, should be excluded from the blissful seats ot Paradise.

Having thus addressed the multitude, the Saviour turned himself to the centurion, and said, "Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee." And the evangelist adds, "his servant was healed in the self-same hour."

On the succeeding Sabbath our Saviour went into the Jewish synagogue at Capernaum, and taught the people, delivering his instructions in so graceful and elegant a manner that they were all astonished; and, to increase their admiration, one of the congregation, possessed with an unclean spirit, cried out in a terrible manner, "Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God."

But the blessed Jesus, who wanted the testimony of no

such confessors, commanded him to keep silence, and immediately to come out of the man; which command the evil spirit instantly obeyed, to the great surprise and astonishment of the spectators.

The fame of this miracle was soon spread over the neighboring country. He had before healed the sick, and done many wonderful things; but to command with authority the unclean spirits to quit their residence, and to see these enemies of mankind readily obey his voice, filled men with astonishment, and abundantly convinced them that he was filled with the Spirit of God.

Having performed this astonishing miracle in the synagogue, our Lord retired to Peter's house, where he found his wife's mother sick of a fever; but on his taking her by the hand, she was immediately restored to her former health, and arose from the bed, and "ministered unto him."

The evangelist, St. Luke, in his account of this miraculous cure, tells us, that "he rebuked the fever," to intimate his authority over all diseases; being analogous to the figurative expressions in Scripture, which not only represent all inanimate creatures as servants of the Almighty, but diseases, famine, pestilence, and the like, as executioners, waiting on him to inflict punishment on rebellious sinners: "Before him went the pestilence, and burning diseases went forth at his feet."

The fame of these miracles was soon spread over the city; and as soon as the Sabbath was over, which was ended at the setting of the sun, the whole city was gathered together about Peter's house, and with them great numbers of sick persons, and those who were possessed with devils.

The sight of so many objects in distress excited the pity of this heavenly Physician, so that he immediately healed them all; and thus was the prophecy of Isaiah fulfilled: "Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses."

But the vast concourse of people that now gathered round him in Capernaum began to be troublesome, and he retired into a desert, whither the multitude soon followed him, and entreated him never to depart from them. But as this

request was inconsistent with the design of his mission, he for the first time refused their request, "and preached in the synagogues of Galilee."

Having spread his glorious doctrine throughout this place, he returned to Capernaum, followed by such numbers of people that he found it necessary to step into Peter's ship, from whence he taught the multitude, who stood on the shore listening with great attention to his words.

Having concluded his discourse, he turned himself to Simon Peter, desiring him to launch out further from the shore, and let down his net; on which the disciple told him of the unsuccessful pains they had taken during the whole night; but added, that he would, in obedience to his command, make one trial more.

Nor had he any cause to repent; for the net was no sooner in the lake that they found it so full of fishes, that it was in danger of breaking; the draught being so large they were compelled to call "unto their partners in another ship that they should come and help them. And they came and filled both ships."

This success, after such ill fortune, astonished Peter, who falling down at the feet of Jesus, cried out, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord."

He was conscious of the many sins he had been guilty of, and therefore afraid of being in the company of so divine a person, lest some offense might have exposed him to more than ordinary chastisement.

But the benevolent Redeemer of mankind allayed his fears by telling him that from henceforth the employment of him and his companions should be far more noble; they should "catch men," that is, they should turn them from the crooked paths of iniquity, to the strait road leading to the heavenly mansions.

This miracle was considered by the disciples as a plainer manifestation of his being the Son of God, than those they had seen him perform on the sick in the city and neighborhood of Capernaum.

It was a received opinion among the Jews, that all good

men, by prayers and laying their hands on the sick, were able to cure certain diseases, and even cast out devils, but that the creatures inhabiting the element of air or water, were subject only to the command of Omnipotence himself, consequently, the power shown by our blessed Saviour on this occasion undeniably proved him to be divine.

And, accordingly, the demonstration of his power rendered those principles, for the future, absolutely devoted to his will; and in the greatness of their admiration, they abandoned every thing, and followed the Saviour of the world.

The disciples being thus attached to their Divine Master, followed him through the cities of Galilee, where, according to his usual custom, he preached the gospel of the kingdom of God, and confirmed the doctrine he delivered with astonishing miracles.

In one of the cities through which he passed, he found "a man full of leprosy, who, seeing Jesus, fell on his face, and besought him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean."

It was the custom in Judea for the priests to banish from society those persons who were affected with contagious leprosy. The disease of this person, therefore, was of a less pestilential kind, as he was suffered to enjoy the conversation of men. His case, however, excited the pity of the compassionate Jesus, who immediately cleansed him, and ordered him to repair to Jerusalem; and, after showing himself to the priest, offer the gifts commanded by Moses; giving the same admonition he had given to others—not to tell any man what had been done for him.

But the blessing was so great and unexpected, that, instead of concealing, he published every where the great things Jesus had done for him; which brought such crowds to the Son of God, that he was obliged to retire from Capernaum into the wilderness, to refresh his body with rest, and his spirit with prayer and meditation.

The generality of commentators suppose that this leper, and the other mentioned in the foregoing chapter, are one and the same person; but this is a mistake.

The former was cured in the fields, the latter in the city After cleansing the first, Jesus went to Capernaum, and healed the centurion's servant; but after curing the latter, he retired into the wilderness, to shun the prodigious crowds, which soon gathered round him, from the leper's publishing every where the miracle Jesus had wrought for him.

But he could not long enjoy the tranquillity he sought, even in the thirsty waste; the people soon discovered the place of his retreat, and flocked to him from every quarter.

Our blessed Lord, finding all his endeavors to conceal himself in the desert would be vain, ordered his disciples to accompany him to the other side of the lake, upon which a certain scribe, who happened to be present, declared he would follow him: but Jesus, who well knew that his desire was only to gain the profits and advantages of an earthly kingdom, which he supposed the Messiah would establish, told him that if he intended nothing more, by following him, than to improve his worldly wealth, he would find himself wretchedly mistaken. "The foxes have holes," said the blessed Jesus to this teacher of Israel, "and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head."

The disciples having prepared the ship, took on board their Master, and departed for the other side of the lake, attended by many boats full of people, who were desirous of hearing his heavenly discourses, and of being spectators of his astonishing miracles.

But Jesus being fatigued with the labors of the day, sat himself down at the stern of the ship, and fell asleep. The weather, which, till now, had been calm and serene, suddenly changed.

A terrible storm came on, and the rising waves dashed impetuously against the ship, threatening every moment to bury them all in the bowels of the deep.

The darkness of the night increased the horrors of the tempest. Now they were carried on the top of the mountainous waves, and seemed to touch the skies; then plunged to the bottom of the deep, while the foaming billows roared

horribly above them. In vain the disciples exerted their utmost strength; the storm continued to increase, and baffled all the efforts of human strength. The waves broke over the ship, the waters rushed in, and she began to sink.

All hopes of escaping were vanished; despair seized every individual, and they were on the brink of perishing, when they ran to Jesus, crying out, "Master, Master, we perish!" Their vehement cries roused him from his sleep. He raised his hand, so often employed in acts of mercy and benevolence; and, with a stern and awful voice, rebuked the boisterous elements. The raging sea instantly obeyed his command. The aerial torrent stopped short in its impetuous course, and became silent as the grave, while the mountainous waves sunk at once into their beds, and the surface of the deep became as smooth as polished marble.

The disciples seemed to have forgotten the power of their Master, and when human assistance failed, to have abandoned all hopes of life. The blessed Jesus, therefore, very justly rebuked them: "Why are ye so fearful? O ye of little faith!" Why should ye doubt my power to protect you? The voyage was undertaken at my command, and therefore you should have been confident that I would not suffer you to perish in it.

Soon after the storm was allayed, they arrived in the country of Gadara; and on their landing, two men possessed with devils came from the tombs to meet Jesus. One of them, who was more furious than the other, had been bound with chains and fetters, but to no purpose, they being always broken with great fury; so that no man attempted further to restrain him.

Being therefore at liberty, he shunned the society of men, wandered day and night in desert places, among the sepulchres or caverns where the dead were deposited, crying and making the most dismal complaints, and cutting himself with stones.

The disciples were terrified at the approach of these furious mortals; but Jesus soon dissipated their fears, commanding, while the men were at a distance, the devils to come out of them.

The heavenly mandate was no sooner given, than they fell on their faces, crying out, "What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" "I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not."

Jesus being willing that the torment suffered by these miserable men should be known before he healed them, asked one of the devils his name, who answered, "Legion, for we are many," begging, at the same time, that he would not command them to repair into the deep, or bottomless pit, but suffer them to enter a herd of swine feeding at a distance. The Saviour permitted this, that his disciples, and those who were with him, might be fully convinced that these unhappy persons were really possessed by apostate spirits, and at the same time give them a terrible instance of their power when free from all restraint.

The Divine permission was no sooner granted, than the spectators beheld at a distance the torments these poor creatures suffered, with what amazing rapidity they ran to the confines of the lake, leaped from the precipices into the sea, "and perished in the waters," while the persons who, a moment before, were raving and cutting themselves in the most shocking manner, became at once meek and composed, having recovered entirely the exercise of their reason. The keepers of the herd, terrified at this astonishing miracle, ran into the city, publishing in every part the cure of the men possessed with the devils, and the destruction of the swine.

This surprising report threw the inhabitants into the greatest consternation; they left the city, to be spectators of so wonderful an event; but when they saw the men who had been possessed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, decently clothed, and in their right minds, their fear was increased. For, knowing they had trespassed in keeping the swine, which was contrary to the law of Moses, they dreaded a more severe punishment; and being ignorant of the goodness of Jesus, though he had given them so remarkable a proof of it in the cure of these wretched mortals, they besought him that he would leave their country.

The stupid request of the Gadarenes was, however, complied with by the blessed Jesus, who, entering the ship, returned to the country from whence he came, leaving them a valuable pledge of love, and a noble pattern of perseverance in well-doing, even when our kindnesses are condemned, or requited with injuries.

He would not suffer the persons dispossessed to accompany him, though they earnestly requested it; but ordered them to stay in their own country, as a standing monument of his power and goodness. "Go home to thy friends," said the compassionate Jesus to one of them, "and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee."

No sooner was the arrival of our Saviour and his disciples at Capernaum published, than such throngs of people were gathered together, that the house could not contain them, nor even the court before the door.

He, however, preached the words of eternal life to the listening audience, among whom were many Pharisees and doctors of the law, who, from the fame of his miracles, were come from all quarters to hear him.

He not only addressed them in the most nervous and pathetic manner, in order to inculcate the doctrines he delivered, but also performed such astonishing miracles as ought to have removed all their scruples with regard to the truth of his mission.

Among other instances he gave of his divine power, was that of restoring a man to perfect health, who had long been afflicted with the palsy, and was reduced by that terrible disease to the most melancholy condition, being unable to move any member of his body, but seemed rather an emaciated carcass than a man.

This miserable object was supported in his bed by four persons, who, being unable to enter by the door, on account of the multitude, carried him to the top of the house, which, like the other roofs in that country, was flat, and had a battlement round according to the direction given by Moses.

On these was a kind of trap-door, by which they came out

of the houses upon the roofs, where they spent a considerable part of the day. It was also common to have a flight of stairs from the garden to the roof; and by these the persons seem to have carried the sick of the palsy; but finding the door fastened, forced open, or uncovered the roof, and through the opening let down by ropes the sick of the palsy, lying on his bed, into the midst of the company, before Jesus; who, seeing the faith of the friends of the afflicted person, he had compassion on him, and spake aloud, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven thee."

The Scribes, taking offense at this saying, cried out, This man speaketh blasphemy; for he appropriates that to himself which is solely the province of Omnipotence. "Who can forgive sins but God only?"

They were ignorant that the person who uttered these gracious words was the Son of God, and consequently had the power of forgiving the sins of the human race. But our Lord, who had recourse to the most secret recesses of the heart, and was willing to show them that he was really endued with the Spirit of God, said to them, "Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? For whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed and walk?" These were questions beyond the abilities of the haughty Scribes to answer, and, therefore, they held their peace; and the blessed Jesus then added, that the miracles he was going to perform would sufficiently demonstrate that he had not usurped what did not in the strictest manner belong to him.

And turning himself from these bigoted teachers of Israel, toward the sick of the palsy, he said unto him, "Arise, take up thy bed and go unto thy own house."

Nor was this divine mandate any sooner given, than the man was restored to his former health and strength; and to the astonishment of all present, took up his bed, and departed to his own house, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw this great work, expressed the highest degree of surprise, mixed with admiration, for all the great honor the Almighty had conferred on human nature. "They glorified

God, who had given such power unto men." The blessed Jesus, having wrought this miracle, repaired to the sea-side, and taught a multitude of the people.

What the subject of his sermon was, the evangelists have not told us; but it was, doubtless, like the rest, calculated to promote the eternal welfare of mankind.

His discourse being ended, he returned to the city, and in his way saw Matthew, or Levi, the son of Alpheus, a rich publican, sitting in his office, where the customs are levied, at the port of Capernaum, whom he ordered to follow him.

Matthew immediately obeyed the summons, and followed the Saviour of the world, to pursue a far more honorable and important employment, being afterward both an apostle and an evangelist.

Some little time after this call, he made a splendid entertainment for his Master, inviting all the publicans he knew; hoping that by hearing the heavenly conversation of Christ, they might also repent, and embrace the doctrines of the gospel.

The self-righteous Scribes and Pharisees entered into a controversy with Jesus, during which, Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, came running to him, in all the agonies of grief; and in the presence of the whole company, fell on the ground before him, beseeching him that he would come and heal his daughter, who lay at the point of death.

When did the beneficent Jesus deny his gracious assistance to those who implored it of him?

He immediately arose, and followed the ruler toward his house, surrounded by a great multitude of people, who were desirous of seeing so great a miracle performed.

But as he passed through the streets, a woman who had for twelve years been afflicted with an issue, or flux of blood, and had spent her whole substance on physicians, to no purpose, "came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment; for she said within herself, if I may but touch his clothes, I shall be whole."

Nor was she deceived; for no sooner had she touched the border of the garment of the Son of God, than "her issue

of blood dried up;" and she felt, by the return of her health and strength, and other agreeable sensations that accompany such sudden changes from painful diseases to perfect health, that the cure was absolutely complete.

But this transaction could not be concealed: the blessed Jesus knew the whole, and her secret thoughts before she put them in practice; and pleased with the opinion this woman had entertained both of his power and goodness, would not by any means suffer it to pass unapplauded.

Accordingly, he turned himself about, and asked, "Who touched me?" He well knew the person; but asked this question for the fuller manifestations of the woman's faith, and that he might have an opportunity of instructing and comforting her.

His disciples being ignorant of what had passed, were surprised at the question: "Thou seest," said they to their Master, "the multitude thronging and pressing thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?" They did not distinguish between the spiritual and corporeal touch, nor know that such efficacious virtue had gone out of their Master.

Jesus, however, persisted in knowing who it was that had done the thing; and the woman finding it in vain to conceal her action any longer, came to him trembling, and told him all. Perhaps the uncleanness of her distemper was the reason of her fear, thinking he would be offended even at her touching the hem of his garment.

But the Divine Physician, far from being angry, spake to her in the kindest manner, commending her faith, on which account he had consented to heal her plague,—"Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made the whole."

Such a miraculous incident must doubtless have greatly strengthened the ruler's faith; for behold a virtue, little inferior to that of raising the dead, issues from the border of his garment, and heals a disease which for the space of twelve years had baffled all the precepts of the healing art, and defied the power of medicine.

Indeed, the faith of this ruler had need of the strongest confirmation, for news was brought him that his daughter

was even now dead, and therefore it was needless for him to give any further trouble to Jesus, not in the least suspecting that he had power to recall the departed spirit, and reanimate a breathless carcass.

This message was a terrible blow to the affectionate parent. His only daughter, who, a few days before, was in the bloom of youth, was now a pale and lifeless corpse; and with her all his joys and comforts were fled.

But Jesus, commiserating his grief, desired him to be comforted, promising that his daughter should be restored.

On his coming to the ruler's house, he found it full of mourners, who made terrible lamentations; a sufficient demonstration that the damsel was really dead; and accordingly when our blessed Saviour desired the mourners to cease their funeral ceremonies, as "the maid was not dead, but sleeping," they "laughed him to scorn."

Having thus briefly addressed the mourners, he entered the chamber where the damsel was lying, but suffered none to follow him, except Peter, James and John, together with the father and mother of the damsel.

Probably his reason for suffering these only to be spectators of so stupendous a work was, that they might have an opportunity of examining the whole transaction in the most careful manner, and be thence enabled afterward to report it, upon the fullest conviction, and with every circumstance of credibility.

The blessed Jesus now approached the body, took her by the hand, and with a gentle voice, said, "Maid arise."

The heavenly command was instantly obeyed; the damsel arose, as from a sleep, and with all the appearance of health and vigor; for Jesus commanded to give her something to eat; a plain proof that she did not appear in the weak and languishing condition of a person worn out with disease, or even like one who had fainted away; a circumstance that abundantly proves the greatness and perfection of the miracle.

It is, therefore, no wonder that her parents should be astonished at so stupendous a work, the fame of which was

presently spread through all the neighboring country; though Jesus, who was in every sense above praise, and therefore never courted it, had strictly charged them to tell no man what he had done.

These instances of power did the blessed Jesus display to convince the world that those who die in him are not dead; and that he has the keys of life and death.

Those also, of the present age, who believe that the soul sleeps with the body till the resurrection, would do well to consider the expression of the evangelist, "Her spirit came again," which sufficiently shows that the soul exists separately when the body is laid in the chambers of the grave.

Having performed this benevolent miracle, our blessed Saviour left the ruler's house, and was followed through the streets by two blind men, imploring assistance; nor did they implore in vain. The Redeemer of mankind was, and is, always ready to grant the petitions of those who apply to him for relief. Accordingly, he no sooner entered into the house, to avoid the thronging of the multitude, than he touched their eyes, and said, "According to your faith, be it unto you;" and immediately the valuable gift of sight was bestowed on them.

The men who had thus miraculously received their sight, being departed, the multitude brought to him "a dumb man possessed with a devil."

So moving a sight could not fail of attracting a compassionate regard from the Saviour of the world, who, being never weary of well-doing, immediately cast out the apostate spirit; on which the dumb man recovered his speech, and spoke in a very rational manner to the multitude, who with one voice declared that such wondrous works were never wrought by any of the old prophets.

"It was never so seen in Israel."

These works did not remove the prejudice of the Pharisees, who being unable to deny the miracle, insinuated that he did it by a power received from Beelzebub, "the prince of the devils,"—a poor pretense indeed, which did not escape the animadversion of the Saviour of the world.

But all their calumnies did not provoke the meek and merciful Jesus, to cease from performing these compassionate offices for the children of men.

On the contrary, he exerted himself still more and more to promote the prosperity and salvation of the whole human race.

Accordingly, he left Capernaum, and traveled through the country in search of miserable objects on whom he might confer happiness and peace; "visiting all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people."

In his return from this tour to Capernaum, he was attended by a great number of people, who expressed a more than common desire to hear the doctrines of the gospel—an incident abundantly sufficient to engage the attention of this divine Teacher, who was always careful to cultivate the latent seeds of virtue, and cherish the least appearance of piety and religion.

The inhabitants of Judea were truly in a deplorable condition, which called loudly for the compassion of the Son of God, who always regarded the descendants of Jacob with the most tender affection.

He saw the sheep of Israel scattered on the barren wastes of error and superstition, without a shepherd to lead them to the heavenly pastures of the law and the prophets.

He saw: he commiserated their distress, and he resolved to provide some remedy for it. Accordingly, he directed his apostles to intercede with the Almighty, who, by his servants, the prophets, had sown the seeds of piety and virtue, in the minds of the Jews, that he would not suffer the rich harvest to be lost for the want of laborers. "The harvest," said the blessed Jesus to his disciples, "truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest."

To these gracious acts he added the most powerful of all intercessions to the throne of grace, his own prevailing prayer; and accordingly ascended to the top of a mountain,

and there spent the night in making the most powerful petitions in behalf of "the lost sheep of Israel," to his heavenly Father.

Having spent the night in this pious exercise, he lost no time in putting his beneficent intentions into execution; for no sooner had darkness withdrawn her sable veil, and the blushing rays of the morning adorned the chambers of the east, than this benevolent Redeemer of mankind called his disciples to him, and chose twelve, "whom he named apostles, to be always with him, and that he might send them forth to preach."

He ordered them to be constantly with him, that they might learn from his own mouth the doctrines they were to preach to the whole world, that they might see his glory, the transcendent glory of the virtues which adorned his human life, and that they might be witnesses of all the wondrous works he should perform during his residence in this vale of misery, and by which his mission from the court of heaven was to be fully demonstrated.

Having ordained them to their respective offices, he sent them out by two and two, into the most distant parts of Judea, to preach there the glad tidings of the Gospel, and prepare the way for their Master, the great Shepherd of Israel. And that nothing might be wanting to render their preaching acceptable to the people, and confirm the important doctrines they delivered, he invested them with full power to cure all diseases, cast out devils, and even to raise the dead.

After this appointment of the twelve apostles, he came down from the mountain, and was joyfully received by multitudes of people, who were waiting for him in the plain, and pressed to touch him; well knowing if they could only touch the border of his garment they should be healed of whatever distemper they were afflicted with; a sufficient reason why they were continually waiting for him, and were willing to accompany him even into the remotest corners of the wilderness.

CHAPTER V.

RESTORES TO LIFE THE WIDOW'S SON AT NAIN; MIRACULOUS CURE AT THE POOL OF BETHESDA; DELIVERS REMARKABLE PARABLES, AND EXPLAINS SEVERAL; COMMISSIONS THE APOSTLES TO PREACH; FEEDS FIVE THOUSAND BY MIRACLE.

AVING received their commission, the apostles visited all the parts of Palestine where the Jews inhabited, preaching the doctrine of repentance, working miracles for its confirmation, and particularly healing the sick, while our blessed Saviour continued the course of his ministry in Galilee.

The apostles being returned from their tour, Jesus went to Nain, a town situated near Endor, about two miles south of Mount Tabor, attended by many of his disciples, and a great multitude of people.

On their coming to the entrance of the city, a melancholy scene presented itself to the eyes of Jesus and his followers. "Behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow."

Who would not have imagined that God had indeed "forgotten to be gracious, and in his anger shut up his tender mercies" from this poor widow, suffering under the heaviest load, and laboring under the most oppressive burden of distress? deprived of her only son, in the flower of his youth, when he might have repaid his mother's toils, and been to her in the place of a husband; of that husband she had not long since lost, and whose loss was supportable only through the comfort of this child, the surviving image of his departed father, the balm of all her grief, the hope of her afflicted soul. Who now shall administer consolation to this solitary widow, to this lonely parent, bereaved of her husband, deprived of her child? What misery can be more complicated? What can be more natural than that she should "refuse to be comforted?" that she should "go down to the grave with mourn-

ing," and visit the chambers of death, the residence of the beloved remains of her husband and son, with sorrow?

Toward the receptacle of mortality, that dreary waste of forgetfulness, the mournful funeral with slow and solemn pomp was advancing, when the compassionate Redeemer of mankind met the melancholy procession, composed of a long train of her weeping neighbors and relations, who pitied her distress, sympathized with her in this great affliction, and were melted with compassion at her deplorable circumstances; but sighs and tears were all they had to offer; relief could not be expected from a human being: their commiseration, though grateful to her afflicted soul, could neither restore the husband nor the son; submission and patience were the only lessons they could preach, or this afflicted daughter of Israel learn.

But though man was unable to relieve the distresses of this disconsolate widow, the Saviour of the world, who beheld the melancholy procession, was both able and willing to do it. There was no need of a powerful solicitor to implore assistance from the Son of God; his own compassion was abundantly sufficient. "When the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her;" he both sought the patient, and offered the cure unexpectedly. "Weep not," said the blessed Jesus to this afflicted woman. Alas! it had been wholly in vain to bid her refrain from tears who had lost her only child, the sole comfort of her age, without administering the balm of comfort to heal her broken spirit. This our compassionate Redeemer well knew; and, therefore, immediately advancing toward the corpse, "he touched the bier;" the pomp of the funeral was instantly stopped, silence closed every mouth, and expectation filled the breast of every spectator.

But this deep suspense did not long continue; that glorious voice which shall one day call our dead bodies from the grave, filled their ears with these remarkable words: "Young man, I say unto thee, arise!" Nor was this powerful command uttered without its sure effect. "He spake, and it was done;" he called with authority, and immediately "he that was dead sat up, and began to speak; and he restored him to his mother.'

He did not show him around to the multitude; but, by a singular act of modesty and humanity, delivered him to his late afflicted, now astonished and rejoicing mother, to intimate that, in compassion to her great distress he had wrought this stupendous miracle.

A holy and an awful fear fell on all who heard and saw this astonishing event; "and they glorified God, saying, a great prophet is risen up among us; and God hath visited his people."

Soon after this, having concluded a public address, one of the Pharisees, named Simon, desired he would "eat with him;" the blessed Jesus accepted the invitation, accompanied him to his house, and sat down to meat.

He had not long continued at the table, before a woman who had lately left the paths of vice for those of virtue, placed herself behind him, and from a deep conviction of her former crimes, and the obligations she owed the Saviour of mankind for bringing her to a sense of them, shed such quantities of tears that they trickled down on his feet, which, according to the custom of the country, were then bare.

But observing that her tears had wet the feet of her beloved instructor, she immediately wiped them with the hair of her head, kissed them with the most ardent affection, and anointed them with a precious ointment she had brought with her for that purpose.

It was a custom among the inhabitants of the east, to pour fragrant oils on the heads of such guests as they intended particularly to honor, while they sat at meat; and probably the woman's original intention was to anoint Jesus in the usual manner.

But, being exceedingly humbled on account of her former crimes, she could not presume to take such a freedom with him, and therefore poured it on his feet, to express at once the greatness of her love, and the profoundness of her humility.

The Pharisee, who had attentively observed the woman, concluded from thence that the Saviour could not be a prophet. "This man," said the Pharisee to himself, "if he

were a prophet, would have known who, and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him; for she is a sinner."

But though Simon spoke this only in his heart, his thoughts were not concealed from the great Redeemer of mankind, who, to convince him that he was a prophet, and knew not only the characters of men, but even the secret thoughts of their hearts, immediately conversed with him upon the very subject he was revolving in his mind.

He did not indeed expose him before the company, by relating what he said in secret, but with remarkable delicacy pointed out to Simon alone the unreasonableness of his thoughts. "Simon," said the blessed Jesus, "I have something to say to thee: there was a certain creditor which had two debtors; the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me, therefore, which of them will love him most?" Simon answered and said, "I suppose that *he* to whom he forgave most." And he said unto him, "Thou hast rightly judged;" and then immediately applied this short parable to the subject of the woman, on which the Pharisee had so unjustly reasoned with himself.

"Simon," continued our Saviour, "seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet; but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss; but this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint; but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment."

This woman's kind services were in no danger of losing their reward from the blessed Jesus, who possessed the softer and finer feelings of human nature in their utmost perfection. Accordingly, he added, in pursuance of the kind invitation he had made before to weary and heavy-laden sinners, "Wherefore, I say unto thee, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little."

The blessed Jesus having thus commended the conduct of the woman to the company, and rebuked, with great delicacy,

the unjust suspicions of Simon, turned himself to the woman, and in the kindest manner assured her that "her sins were forgiven."

The next day Jesus traveled from Capernaum to different parts of Galilee, "going through every village, preaching and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God." That is, he declared to the people the welcome tidings of the Almighty's being willing to be reconciled to the children of men, on condition of their repentance, and embracing the gospel of the grace of God.

Leaving Galilee, he repaired to Jerusalem, to keep the passover, being the second feast of that kind since his public ministry. In this journey he was accompanied by certain pious women, "who ministered to him of their substance."

Our Lord had no sooner entered the ancient city of Jerusalem, so long famous for being the dwelling-place of the Most High, than he repaired to the public bath or pool, called in the Hebrew tongue "Bethesda," that is, "the house of mercy," on account of the miracles wrought there by the salutary effects of the water at certain seasons.

This bath was surrounded by five porches, or cloisters, in which those who frequented the place were sheltered both from the heat and cold, and were particularly serviceable to the diseased and infirm, who crowded thither to find relief in their afflictions. These porches were now filled with a "great multitude of impotent folk,—of blind, halt, withered,—waiting for the moving of the water."

Among these objects of pity was one who had labored under his infirmity no less than thirty and eight years. The length and greatness of this man's affliction, which were well known to the Son of God, were sufficient to excite his tender compassion, and make him the happy object to demonstrate that his power of healing was infinitely superior to the sanative virtue of the waters of Bethesda, while the rest were suffered to remain in their affliction.

Our compassionate Lord approached the man whom he had singled out as the person on whom to manifest his power; he asked him whether he was desirous of being made whole,—

a question which must induce the man to declare publicly his melancholy case, in the hearing of the multitude, and consequently, render the miracle more conspicuous. And as this was done on the Sabbath day, our blessed Saviour seems to have wrought it to rouse the sons of Jacob from their lethargy, and convince the inhabitants of Jerusalem that the long-expected Messiah was now come, and that "God had actually visited his people." This distressed mortal, beholding Jesus with a sorrowful countenance, and understanding that he meant his being healed by the sanative virtue of the waters, answered, in a plaintive accent, "Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool; but while I am coming, another steppeth in before me."

But the compassionate Redeemer of mankind soon convinced him that he was not to owe his cure to the salutary nature of the waters, but to the unbounded power of the Son of God, and accordingly said to him, "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk."

Nor was the heavenly mandate any sooner uttered, than the impotent man, to the astonishment of the multitude, "was made whole; and took up his bed, and walked."

Soon after the miracle was performed, Jesus met in the temple the man he had healed at the pool of Bethesda, and took the opportunity of reminding him that, as he was now freed from an infirmity he had brought upon himself by irregular courses, he should be careful to abstain from them for the future, lest the Almighty should think proper to afflict him in a more terrible manner.

This man, overjoyed at having found the Divine Physician, who had relieved him from his melancholy condition, repaired to the Scribes and Pharisees, and, with a heart overflowing with gratitude, innocently told them that it was Jesus who had performed so astonishing a cure; being doubtless persuaded that they would rejoice at beholding so great a prophet.

But, alas! this was far from being the case; the rulers of Israel, instead of being pleased with accounts of his many stupendous works of mercy and kindness, attacked him tumultuously in the temple, and carried him before the

Sanhedrim, with an intention to take away his life, merely because he had done good on the Sabbath day.

Jesus, however, soon vindicated, by irrefragable arguments, the propriety of his works; observing that, in performing works of mercy and beneficence on the Sabbath day, he only imitated his heavenly Father, the God of Jacob, whose providence was continually employed, without any regard to times or seasons, in doing good for the children of men.

He also gave them to understand that the proofs of his mission were as full and clear as possible, being supported by the actions of his life, which in all things agreed with his doctrine; for he never sought the applause of men, or assumed secular power, but was always innocent and humble, though he well knew that these virtues made him appear little in the eyes of those who had no idea of a spiritual kingdom, but expected the Messiah would appear in all the pomp of secular authority.

Thus did the blessed Jesus assert himself to be the Son of God, the great Judge of the whole earth, and the Messiah promised by the prophets; and at the same time gave them such convincing proofs of his being sent from God, that nothing could be said against them.

A dispute with the Pharisees followed, during which Jesus was informed that his mother and brethren, or kinsmen, were without, desiring to speak with him; upon which the blessed Jesus stretched out his hand toward his disciples, and said, "Behold my mother and my brethren. For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

This glorious truth should be stamped upon the minds of all believers, as it shows that every one, of what nation or kindred soever, who is brought into subjection to the will of God, is allied to the blessed Jesus, and entitled to the salvation of God.

The miraculous power of our blessed Lord, both in performing the most astonishing acts, and confuting the most learned of the Pharisaical tribe, who endeavored to oppose his mission and doctrine. brought together so great a multi-

tude, that he repaired to the seaside; and for the better instructing the people, he entered into a ship, and the multitude stood on the shore. Being thus conveniently seated, he delivered many precepts of the utmost importance, beginning with the parable of the sower, who casts his seed on different kinds of soil, the products of which were answerable to the nature of the ground, some yielding a large increase, others nothing at all. By this striking similitude the blessed Jesus represented the different kinds of hearers, and the different manner in which they are affected by the truths of religion. Some wholly suppress the doctrines delivered; in others they produce the fruits of righteousness, in proper proportion to the goodness of their hearts.

And surely a more appropriate parable could not have been delivered, when such multitudes came to hear his discourses, and so few practiced the precepts or profited by the heavenly doctrines they contained.

Our blessed Saviour concluded his discourse to the multitude with the parable of the leaven, to intimate the influence of the doctrines of the gospel on the minds of particular persons: "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened."

While Jesus was thus employed in his heavenly Father's business, his mother and brethren came a second time, desiring to see him. In all probability they feared that the continued fatigue of preaching would injure his health; and were therefore desirous of taking him with them, that he might refresh himself.

But the blessed Jesus, who was never weary of doing good, answered his indulging parent as before: "My mother and my brethren are those which hear the word of God, and do it."

Night approaching, Jesus dismissed the multitude, and returned to the house in Capernaum where he abode, and there explained to his disciples the parable of the tares in the field. The husbandman, said our Saviour, is the Son of Man. The field, the christian church, planted in different

parts of the world. The wheat are those christians who believe in Christ, who obey the precepts of the gospel, and are supported by the influences of the Holy Spirit; and the tares, the bad professors, seduced into the paths of vice by the temptations of the devil. Our blessed Lord, therefore, by this parable, represented the mixed nature of the church on earth, the dismal end of hypocrites, and those who forget God; for these may deceive for a time, by assuming the robes of virtue and religion; yet they will not fail, sooner or later, to betray themselves, and show that they are only wolves in sheep's clothing.

Our Lord on this occasion delivered the parables of the treasure hid in the field, and of the pearl of great price, both designed for the same purpose, to promote the diligence, zeal, and resolution of his disciples, in searching into and teaching these great and important truths, in which the glory of God and the salvation of souls were so much concerned.

And surely the similitudes both of the treasures and pearl are very naturally used to signify the gospel; the former, as it enriches all who possess it; and the latter, because it is more precious than rubies.

Our blessed Saviour, having finished these parables, asked his disciples if they understood them; and upon their answering in the affirmative, he added, that every teacher of the gospel ought to resemble a person whose house was completely furnished, and brought "forth out of his treasure things new and old."

Soon after, Jesus left Capernaum, and repaired to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and preached in the synagogue the glad tidings of the kingdom of God; but his townsmen, though astonished at his doctrine, could not overcome the prejudices they had conceived against him, on account of the meanness of his family, and thence refused to own him as the Messiah.

Our Saviour, finding them the same incorrigible persons as when he visited them before, departed from them, and taught in the neighboring villages.

They, in common with all the Jews, were strangers to the

true character of the Messiah, whom they considered as a temporal prince; and therefore could not bear that a person so mean as Jesus appeared to be, should perform works peculiar to that idol of their vanity, a glorious, triumphant, secular Messiah.

While the Lord resided in the neighborhood of Nazareth, he sent out his disciples to preach in different parts of Galilee, and to proclaim the glad tidings, that God was then going to establish the kingdom of the Messiah, wherein he should be worshiped in spirit and in truth.

And in order that they might confirm the doctrines they delivered, and prove that they had received their commission from the Son of God, they were endowed with the power of working miracles. How long they continued their preaching, can not be known, but it is reasonable to think they spent considerable time in it, preaching in several parts of Judea.

The miracles which the apostles wrought raised the expectations of men higher than ever; the people were astonished to see the disciples of Jesus perform such miracles, and thence concluded that our Saviour must be greater than any of the old prophets, who could not transmit the power they enjoyed to any other. This extraordinary circumstance could not fail of spreading his fame through the whole country; it even reached the ears of Herod the Tetrarch, who, fearing a person of such extraordinary abilities, was very uneasy; which some of his courtiers observing, endeavored to remove, telling him that one of the old prophets were risen from the dead; but this did not satisfy him, and he declared that he believed it was John the Baptist risen from the dead.

It is not strange that his conscience should thus have accused him, for he beheaded this great and good man to gratify the request of a wicked, revengeful woman.

The disciples were so alarmed at the cruel fate of the Baptist, whose memory they highly revered, that they returned from their mission, and assisted in performing the last offices to the body of their master, many of the apostles having been originally disciples of John.

As soon as these pious rites were over, they repaired to Jesus, and told him all that had happened.

Their compassionate master, on hearing this melancholy news, retired with them by sea into a desert place, belonging to Bethsaida, that by retirement, meditation, and prayer, they might be refreshed and recruited for their spiritual labors; and at the same time leave an example to us, that we should often retire from the noise and hurry of the world, and offer up the most fervent prayers to our heavenly Father.

But the multitude attended so closely, that their departure was not long concealed; and great numbers of people repaired to the place where they supposed Jesus and his disciples had concealed themselves. Struck with the greatness of his miracles on those who were sick, and anxious to hear more instruction from the mouth of so divine a Teacher, no difficulties were too great for them to surmount, nor any place too retired for them to penetrate, in search of their admired preacher.

Nor was the beneficent Saviour of the world regardless of their pious esteem. He saw them; he was "moved with compassion" toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd, multitudes of people without a pastor, a large harvest without laborers; motives abundantly sufficient to excite compassion in the Son of God.

The situation of those numerous throngs of people, scattered abroad, without a guide, without a guardian; a large flock of defenseless sheep, without a single shepherd to defend them from the jaws of the internal wolf, was truly deplorable; the blessed Jesus, therefore, that "good Shepherd, who came to lay down his life for the sheep," was moved with pity toward them; the same pity which brought him from the courts of heaven for the sake of his lost and wandering sheep in the desert, now brought him to this multitude of people, whom he instructed in the doctrines of eternal life; and with his usual goodness, healed all the sick among them.

Intently devoted to teaching and healing the people, our blessed Saviour did not seem to notice the day to wear away,

and that the greatest part of it was already spent; but his disciples, too anxious about the things of this world, thought proper to advise him of it; as if the Son of God wanted any directions from man. The day, said his disciples, is now far advanced, and the place a solitary desert, where neither food nor lodging can be procured; it would therefore be convenient to dismiss the people, that they may repair to the towns or villages on the borders of the wilderness, and provide themselves with food and lodging, for they have nothing to eat.

But our Lord prevented that trouble, by telling them there was no necessity for sending the people away, to procure victuals for themselves, as they might satisfy the hunger of the multitude, by giving them to eat. And at the same time, to prove what opinion the disciples entertained of his power, addressed himself to Philip, who was well acquainted with the country, and said, "Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?"

Philip, astonished at the seeming impossibility of procuring a supply for so great a multitude, with the small sum of money which he knew was their all, and forgetting the extent of his Master's power, answered, "Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one may take a little." Our blessed Saviour might now have put the same question to Philip that he did on another occasion, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?" Hast thou beheld so many miracles, and art still ignorant that I can supply food not only for this people, but for all the sons of men, and for "the cattle upon a thousand hills?" But he contented himself with answering, "Give ye them to eat." The twelve, not yet comprehending the design of their Master, repeated the objection of Philip, but added, that they were willing to expend their whole stock, in order to procure as large a supply as possible. "Shall we go," said they, "and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, that they may eat?" But this was by no means the design of their great Master, who, instead of making a direct answer to their question, asked them, "How

many loaves have ye?" How much provision can be found among this multitude? Go and see.

The disciples obeyed the command of their Master, and Andrew soon returned to inform him that the whole stock amounted to no more than five barley loaves and two small fishes—a quantity so inconsiderable, that they scarcely deserved notice. "What are they," said his disciples, "among so many?" What, indeed, would they have been among such a multitude of people, if they had not been distributed by the creating hand of the Son of God?

Jesus, notwithstanding the number was so small, ordered them to be brought to him, and immediately commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, with which the place abounded, directing his disciples at the same time to range them in a regular order, by hundreds and fifties in a company, each company forming a long square, containing a hundred in rank, and fifty in file, that the number might be more easily ascertained, and the people more regularly served. In obedience to his command, the people sat down in the manner they were ordered, big with the expectation of what this uncommon preparation portended, while the great Master of the banquet stood ready to supply the necessities of all his guests; a banquet where, though they had no canopy but the azure sky, no table but the verdant turf, where their food was only coarse barley-bread and dried fishes, and their drink only water from a bubbling fountain, yet displayed more real grandeur by the presence of the Divine Master of it, than the royal feast of the gorgeous Ahashuerus, or the splendid entertainment of the imperious Nebuchadnezzar.

The multitude being seated, Jesus took the loaves and fishes into his hands, in the sight of all the people, that they might be convinced of the small quantity of provisions that were then before them, and that they could only expect to be fed by his supernatural power. But that hand which had constantly sustained nature, could now easily multiply these five loaves and two fishes; for, as the Psalmist elegantly observes, "He openeth his hand, and filleth all things living with plenteousness." Accordingly, he looked up to heaven,

returned thanks to God, the liberal giver of all good things, for his infinite benevolence in furnishing food for all flesh, and for the power he had conferred on him, of relieving mankind by his miracles, particularly for that he was about to work.

This done, he blessed them; and so particularly efficacious was his blessing, that these five barley-loaves and two small fishes were multiplied into a quantity sufficient to supply the wants of five thousand men, besides women and children, who, on the most favorable supposition, must amount to an equal number.

Thus did the compassionate Redeemer feed at least ten thousand people with five barley-loaves and two small fishes, giving a magnificent proof both of his power and goodness. For when all had eaten to satiety, they took up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces; a much larger quantity than was at first set before our Lord to divide.

Miraculous work! But what is too hard for God!—what is impossible to Omnipotence!

It is remarkable that the time and place tended to magnify its greatness. The place was a desert, where there was no possibility of procuring any sustenance.

Had he done this mighty work in any of the towns or villages round about, the Pharisees in those days, and the infidel of ours, might have objected that he received secretly some supplies; but this in the present case was impossible. The time was the evening; the people had been all the day fasting, and consequently were ready for their meal. Had it been done in the morning, they might have said, either that the people had been just refreshed, or were not hungry, and consequently, the miracle not great. But the time and place wholly removed all objections of this kind, and proved, beyond all possibility of doubt, that "God can furnish a table in the wilderness."

The people were astonished above measure at the stupendous miracle, and, in the height of their transport, proposed to take Jesus by force, and make him a king, concluding that he must then assume the title of the Messiah, whose

coming they had so long expected, and under whose reign they looked for all kinds of temporal felicities. But our Lord, well knowing the intentions of the multitude, and the inclinations of his disciples to second them, ordered the latter to repair immediately to their boats, and sail for Bethsaida, while he sent away the multitude.

They would, it seems, gladly detained the people, with whom they fully agreed in sentiments; and even lingered till he constrained them to get into the boat; so fully were they still possessed with the idea that their Master was to take the reins of government, and become a powerful prince over the house of Jacob.

The people suffered the disciples to depart, without the least remorse, as they saw that Jesus did not go with them. Perhaps they imagined he was sending them away to provide such things as they had need of. Nor did they refuse to disperse when he commanded, purposing to return in the morning, as we find they actually did.

Having thus sent the disciples and the multitude away, Jesus repaired himself to the summit of a mountain, spending the evening in heavenly contemplations, and ardent prayers to his Almighty Father.

But the disciples meeting with a contrary wind, could not continue their course to Bethsaida, which lay about two leagues to the northward of the desert mountain, where the multitude were miraculously fed.

They, however, did all in their power to land as near that city as possible, but were tossed up and down all night by the tempest, so that in the fourth watch, or between three and six o'clock in the morning, they were not above a league from the shore.

Their divine Master beheld from the mountain the distressed situation in which they were; but they were ignorant of his presence, though he was now coming to their relief. From hence we should learn, when the stormy billows of affliction assault, and seem ready to overwhelm us, not to despair of relief; for He who beholds every particular of our distress, and "hath not forgotten to be gracious," will surely

come to our help, and work out our deliverance in a manner altogether unexpected.

He often calms the storm of affliction that surrounds us, and commands the threatening waves of trouble to subside.

Human wisdom, indeed, is often at a loss; it can discover no hopes of deliverance, nor see any way to escape; but the Almighty can easily affect the one, and point out the other.

Such was the state of the disciples; they were tossed by boisterous waves, and opposed in their course by the rapid current of the wind; so that all hopes of reaching the place intended were vanished; when, behold! their heavenly Master, to assist them in their distressful situation, comes to them, walking on the foaming surface of the sea. Their Lord's approach filled them with astonishment; they took him for an apparition, and shrieked for fear.

Their terrors were, however, soon removed; their great and affectionate Master talked to them, with the sound of whose voice they were perfectly acquainted. "Be of good cheer," said the blessed Jesus; "it is I; be not afraid."

This miracle alarmed the disciples, for though they had so very lately seen the miracle of the five loaves, they did not seem to have before formed a proper idea of his power; but being now persuaded that he could be no other than the expected Messiah, they "came and worshiped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God."

Our Saviour seems to have confirmed this miracle by working another; for the evangelist tells us that he had no sooner entered the ship, and hushed the horrors of the storm, than they arrived at the place whither they were going.

When our Lord disembarked, the inhabitants of the neighboring country ran to him, bringing with them all those who were sick; and they were all healed.

It must be remarked that, though ordinarily Jesus resided in the neighborhood of Capernaum, yet he had been absent ever since his visiting Nazareth; and therefore it is natural to think that the inhabitants, on his return, would not omit the opportunity of bringing their sick in such prodigious crowds, that it seems our blessed Saviour did not bestow

particular attention on each of them; and this was the reason of their beseeching him "that they might only touch the hem of his garment: and as many as were touched were made perfectly whole."

It has been mentioned that our blessed Saviour, after miraculously feeding the people, ordered them to disperse, and retire to their places of abode. The former command they obeyed, but, instead of complying with the latter, they staid in the neighborhood of the desert mountain; and observing that no boat had come thither since the disciples left their Master, concluded that Jesus still continued in that place, and had no design of leaving his attendants. Hence, they were persuaded that, though Jesus had modestly declined the honor of being made a king, he would accept it the next day; especially as they might fancy his disciples were dispatched to the other side, with no other intention than to prepare every thing necessary for that purpose. Hopes like these animated them to continue in this solitary wilderness, and take up their lodgings in the caverns of the rocks and mountains, notwithstanding their difficulties were greatly increased by the raging of the storm. But no sooner did the cheering rays of light appear, than the multitude left their retreat, and searched for Jesus in every part of the mountain, to the summit of which they had seen him retire.

Finding their search in vain, they concluded that he must have departed for the other side in some boat belonging to Tiberias, which had been forced by the storm to take shelter in a creek at the foot of the mountain.

Accordingly, they repaired to Capernaum, where they found him in the synagogue, teaching the people; and could not help asking him, with some surprise, "Rabbi, when camest thou hither?"

To this question our Lord replied, that they did not seek him because they were convinced, by his miracles, of the truth of his mission, but because they hoped to be continually fed in the same manner as before. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled." Many

of the Jews listened with pleasure to the doctrines he there delivered; and having heard him describe the properties of the celestial bread, they were animated with an earnest desire of being always fed with it; "Lord," said they, "evermore give us this bread;" to which the blessed Jesus answered, "I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."

Having asserted the dignity of his mission, and demonstrated that it really belonged to him, the blessed Jesus examined the comparison between himself, considered as the bread from heaven, and the manna which Moses provided for their fathers in the howling wilderness. The manna, said he, which your fathers ate in the desert, could not preserve them from temporal death; but the bread which came down from heaven will render man eternally happy.

The self-sufficient, self-righteous Jews were so offended at this discourse, that many of them, who had hitherto been our Saviour's disciples, went out of the synagogue, and never came more to hear him. They found that all their pleasing views of worldly grandeur, and an extensive kingdom, could have nothing more than an ideal foundation, if they acknowledged Jesus to be the Messiah.

But as they were unwilling to abandon all their favorite hopes of power, they refused to own him for the great Redeemer of Israel they had so long expected.

When the Jews were departed, Jesus turned himself to his disciples, and, with a look of ineffable sweetness, said to them, "Will ye also go away?" To this, Peter answered, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe, and are sure, that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."

Peter in this reply alluded to our Lord's declaration of himself, in which he said that he was the bread of life, founding his faith in him as the Messiah. But Jesus, to convince them that he was not ignorant of the secret thoughts of the heart, nor afraid that his enemies should be spectators of his most retired actions, told him that one of the twelve was a wicked man, and would be guilty of the vilest action. The

prediction of Jesus was punctually verified when Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve chosen disciples, basely betrayed his great Lord and Master.

CHAPTER VI.

JESUS CONTINUES TO DISPLAY HIS POWER AND BENEVOLENCE; DELEGATES A SPECIAL POWER TO PETER; PRONOUNCES THE FINAL JUDGMENT OF THE WORLD; REPROVES THE PRIDE OF HIS DISCIPLES, AND TEACHES THEM HUMILITY.

THE season of the grand passover approaching, Jesus went up to Jerusalem to attend that solemnity.

But the Jews, being offended at his discourse in the synagogue of Capernaum, made an attempt upon his life. Our Lord, therefore, finding it impossible to remain at Jerusalem in safety, departed from that city, and retired into Galilee.

The Pharisees were sensible they could not perpetrate their malicious designs upon him upon that occasion; yet they followed him, hoping they might find something by which they might accuse him, and at length ventured to attack him for permitting his disciples to eat with unwashed hands, because in so doing they transgressed the tradition of the elders. To expose the absurdity of such superstitious customs, our Saviour applied to them the words of the prophet Isaiah: "This people honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me."

Having thus reproved the Pharisees, he called the multitude to him, and desired them to reflect on the absurdity of the precepts inculcated by the Scribes. These hypocrites, said he, solicitous about trifles, neglect the great duties of morality, which are of eternal obligation. They shudder with horror at unwashed hands, but are perfectly easy under the guilt of a polluted conscience; though they must be sensible that "not that which goeth into the mouth defileth the

man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth the man."

These doctrines of the truth could not fail of irritating the Pharisees, as they tended to strip them of the mask with which they concealed their deformity, and rendered themselves so venerable in the eyes of the vulgar; and therefore their plots were leveled against his reputation and life.

Jesus, to avoid their malice, retired to the very borders of Palestine, to the coast of those two celebrated Gentile cities, Tyre and Sidon, purposing there to conceal himself for a time; but he could not be hid.

It was as impossible for the "Sun of Righteousness" to be concealed wherever he came with his healing wings and message of peace, as it is for the sun in the firmament, when he riseth in all his glory, "as a bridegroom cometh out of his chamber, and as a giant rejoicing to run his course." For a certain woman of Canaan, having heard of him, determined to implore his assistance. She was indeed one of the most abject sort of Gentiles, a Canaanite, one of that detested race with which the Jews would have no dealing, nor even conversation; but, notwithstanding all these discouraging circumstances, she threw herself, as an humble petitioner, on the never-failing mercies of the Son of God. Strong necessity urged her on; grief and insuperable distress caused her to be importunate. Alas! unhappy parent! her only daughter, her beloved child, had an unclean spirit,—"was grievously vexed with a devil." When her case was so urgent, and her woes so poignant, who can wonder that she was so importunate, and would take no refusal from this divine person, whom she knew was able to deliver her! Accordingly she came,—she fell at his feet, she besought him, she cried, saying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David," have mercy! I plead no merits; as a worthless, suffering wretch, I entreat only the bowels of thy mercy; I entreat it, for I believe thee to be the Son of David, the promised Messiah, the much desired Saviour of the world; have mercy on me, for the case of my child and her distresses are my own.

Is it not at the first view astonishing that such a petitioner

should be apparently rejected; and that by a merciful and bountiful Redeemer, who kindly invited all that were heavy-laden to come to him; who promised to cast out none that would come, and whose business it was "to go about doing good?"

We, however, find that he answered this woman not a word; he did not, in appearance, take the least notice either of her or her distress! But this silence did not intimidate her; she still cried, she still besought, she still importunately pressed her petition; so that the very disciples were moved with her cries, and became her advocates. They themselves, though Jews, besought their Master to dismiss this petitioner, —to grant her request, and to send her away.

But Jesus soon silenced them by an answer agreeable to their own prejudices. "I am not sent," said he, "but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." To this the disciples readily assented; and as they had a high opinion of the Jews' prerogative, were so well satisfied with the answer, that we hear them pleading no more for this lost, this miserable Gentile. But this soothed not her griefs; it was her own cause, and what is immediately our own concern, animates us to the most zealous application. Somewhat encouraged that she was the subject of discourse between our Lord and his disciples, she ventured to approach the Saviour of the world, though she well knew that custom actually forbade such an intercourse; yet she came, she worshiped this "Son of David," she confessed again his divinity, and prayed, saying, "Lord, help me!" The compassionate Saviour now condescended to speak to her, but with words seemingly sufficient to have discouraged every further attempt; nay, to have filled her with bitter dislike to his person, though she had conceived such high and noble notions of his mercy and favor. "It is not meet," said he, "to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs." It is not justice to deprive the Jews, who are the children of the covenant, the descendants of Abraham, of any part of those blessings which I came into the world to bestow, especially to you, who are aliens and strangers to the commonwealth of Israel.

This answer, however severe, could not shake her humility, nor overcome her patience; she meekly answered, "Truth, Lord; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table." Let me enjoy that kindness which the dogs of any family are not denied; from the plenty of miraculous cures which thou bestowest on the Jews, drop this one to me, who am a poor distressed heathen; for they will suffer no greater loss by it than the children of a family do by the crumbs which are cast to the dogs.

Our Lord having put the woman's faith to a severe trial, and well knowing that she possessed a just notion of his power and goodness, as well as of her own unworthiness, wrought with pleasure the cure she solicited in behalf of her daughter; and, at the same time, gave her faith the praise it so justly deserved: "O woman, great is thy faith! Be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour."

After performing this miracle, Jesus returned to the sea of Galilee, through the regions of Decapolis. In this country, a man was brought to him who was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech. Objects of distress were always treated with benevolence by the holy Jesus: but as the people now thronged about him, in expectation that he would soon establish his kingdom, he thought proper to take the man, with his relations, aside from the multitude; after which he put his fingers in his ears, and touched his tongue, that the deaf man, who could not be instructed by language, might know from whence all his benefits flowed. He then "looked up to heaven, and sighed, and said unto him, Ephphatha, that is, be *opened*. And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain. And he charged them that they should tell no man." But, notwithstanding they were enjoined to secresy, the man or his relations published it in every part of the country, doubtless thinking they could not be too lavish in the praises of so great a benefactor; especially as the modesty with which he had performed the cure, abundantly demonstrated that his sole view was the benefit of the human race.

This rumor gathered the multitude round him in Decapolis; for the fame of his miracles was extended to every corner of the country: he therefore, to avoid these prodigious crowds of people, retired to a desert mountain near the sea of Galilee. But the solitary retreats of the wilderness were unable to conceal this beneficent Saviour of the human race. They soon discovered his retreat, and brought him from all quarters the sick, the lame, the dumb, the blind, and the maimed. The sight of so many objects in distress so excited the compassion of the Son of God, that he graciously released them from all their complaints. Miracles like these could not fail of astonishing the spectators, especially those performed upon the dumb; for it must be remembered that he not only conferred on these the faculty of hearing and pronouncing articulate sounds, but conveyed at once into their minds the whole language of their country; they were instantly acquainted with all the words it contained, their significations, their forms, their powers, and their uses; at the same time they enjoyed the habit of speaking it both fluently and copiously.

This was surely enough to demonstrate to the most stupid that such works could have been affected by nothing less than infinite power.

"The multitude wondered when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see; and they glorified the God of Israel."

The various works performed by the blessed Redeemer detained the multitude with him in the desert three days, during which time they consumed all the provisions they had brought into this solitary place. But Jesus would not send them away fasting, lest any who had followed him so far from their habitations, should faint in their return. Accordingly, he again exerted his almighty power to feed the multitude a second time in the wilderness.

It is highly worthy of notice, the great wisdom of our blessed Saviour, in choosing to spend so great a part of the time he executed his public ministry, in the wilderness and in solitary places. He did not seek the applause of men,

but the eternal salvation of their souls; and therefore often delivered his doctrines in the silent retreats thereof; in consequence of which, he was followed by such only as had dispositions adapted for profiting by his instructions. It could not be supposed that many of different dispositions would accompany him into solitudes, where they were to sustain the inconveniences of hunger for several days successively, and be at the same time exposed to all the inclemencies of the weather. Those only who were desirous of instruction could therefore be expected to follow the blessed Jesus into those retired parts; and on these, doubtless, his doctrine distilled like dew, and like the small rain upon the tender herb. Happy mortals, who thus exchanged the shallow and frothy streams of folly, for the deep and salutary rivers of eternal wisdom! who left the noise and bustle of covetous, bigoted people, for the calm instructions of the Son of God! and exchanged the perishing bread of this world, for the "bread of life—the bread that came down from heaven."

After feeding the multitude miraculously, Jesus retired into a district called Dalmanutha, a part of the territory of Magdala. Here he was visited by the Pharisees, who, having heard that he had a second time fed the multitude miraculously, were fearful that the common people would acknowledge him for the Messiah; and therefore determined openly and publicly to confute his pretensions to that character.

In order to do this, they boldly demanded of him a sign from heaven; for it must be remembered that the Jews expected the Messiah would make his first public appearance in the clouds of heaven, and in a glorious manner establish a temporal kingdom.

If the minds of the Pharisees had been open to conviction, the proofs which Jesus was daily giving them would have been more than sufficient to establish the truth of his mission, and demonstrate that he was the long-expected Messiah. But they were not desirous of being convinced, and to that alone, and not to want of evidence, or of capacity in themselves, it was owing that they refused to acknowledge our Saviour to be the person foretold by the prophets. Their

disposition was absolutely incorrigible, so that Jesus sighed deeply in his spirit, and declared that the sign they sought should never be given them; and that the only sign they were to expect was that of the prophet Jonas, or the miracle of his own resurrection—a sign, indeed, much greater than any shown by the ancient prophets; and consequently, a sign which demonstrated that Jesus was far superior to them all.

Having thus reproved the impertinent curiosity of the Pharisees, he departed with his disciples, and entered into a ship; and as they sailed, he cautioned them to beware of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees, which he termed leaven, from its pernicious influence in filling the minds of men with pride, and other irregular prejudices,—these hypocrites chiefly insisting on the observation of frivolous traditions, but neglecting the true principles of piety, and hence filling the minds of their disciples with a high opinion of their own sanctity.

But the disciples, having forgotten to take bread with them, understood that he intended to caution them against procuring it from the heathens or Samaritans. They were so weak as not to think that their Master, who had fed some thousands of people with five loaves, was also capable of providing for them in their necessities.

On his landing at Bethsaida, they brought unto him a blind man, desiring that he would heal him; Jesus accordingly took the man by the hand, and led him out of the city, and having spat upon his eyes, and put his hands upon him, asked him if he saw aught. To which the man answered, "I see men as trees walking;" a very proper expression to convey an idea of the indistinctness of his vision. Jesus then put his hands again upon him, and he was restored to sight, "and saw every man clearly."

It should be remembered that the people of Bethsaida had, by their ingratitude, impenitence, and infidelity, greatly displeased the Saviour of the world; and this perhaps was the reason why Jesus would not perform the cure in the city, but led the man out into the adjacent plain. The people had also

for a long time been solicitious that he would take upon him self the character of a temporal Messiah, and therefore he chose to perform this miracle without the city; to prevent their further importunity, so incompatible with the modesty and lowliness of our dear Lord and Master.

Jesus having displayed his power and goodness in restoring the blind man to his sight, the blessed Lord departed from Bethsaida, and returned into the territory of Cæsarea Phillipi; where, being desirous of proving in some measure the faith of the apostles, he asked them, saying, "Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" In answer to this question, the disciples replied, "Some say that thou art John the Baptist, some Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets." The people in general mistook the character of our Saviour, because he did not assume that outward pomp and grandeur with which they supposed the Messiah would be adorned. Jesus was therefore desirous of hearing what idea his disciples formed of his character, as they had long enjoyed the benefit of his doctrine and miracles, and accordingly asked them what they themselves understood him to be. To this question Simon Peter replied, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Our Saviour acknowledged the title, telling Peter that God alone had revealed the secret unto him. And in allusion to his surname, "Peter," which signifies a "Rock," our Saviour promised that he should have a principal hand in establishing his kingdom, and that the christian church should be erected on his labors, as on a solid foundation, never to be destroyed.

Having delegated this power to Peter, our Saviour strictly forbade his disciples to tell any man that he was the Messiah, because it had been foretold by the prophets that he should be rejected by the rulers of Israel as a false Christ, and suffer the pains of death; circumstances which could not fail of giving his followers great offense, as they did not yet understand the true nature of his kingdom; and therefore he thought proper to let every man form a judgment of his mission from his doctrines and miracles.

The foregoing discourses had, doubtless, filled the apostles'

minds with lofty imaginations, and therefore our Saviour thought proper to acquaint them with his sufferings, in order to check any fond expectations of temporal power. Peter, however, was greatly displeased to hear his Master talk of dying at Jerusalem, when he had just before accepted of the title of Messiah. Accordingly, he rebuked him for the expression, which he was so bold as to think unguarded. But Jesus, turning himself about, said to Peter, "Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offense unto me; for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." Peter's conduct in this respect arose from an immoderate attachment to sensual objects. Our Saviour thought proper to declare publicly that all who intended to share with him in the glory of the heavenly Canaan, must deny themselves; that is, they must be always ready to renounce every worldly pleasure, and even life itself, when the cause of religion required it; he also told them that in this life they must expect to meet with troubles and disappointments; and that whoever intended to be his disciple, "must take up his cross daily, and follow him."

Thus did the blessed Jesus explain to his disciples the true nature of his kingdom, and at the same time intimated that though they had already undergone many afflictions, yet they must expect still more, and greater, which they must sustain with equal fortitude, following their Master in the footsteps of his afflictions.

To add to the weight of this argument, and to enforce the necessity of self-denial, our Saviour particularly declared that a day was fixed for distributing rewards and punishments to all the human race; and that he himself was appointed by the Father, as universal Judge; so that his enemies could not flatter themselves with the hope of escaping the punishments they deserved, nor his friends be afraid of losing their reward.

To fortify the minds of his disciples, he informed them that he would not appear to judge the world in his low and despised condition, but magnificently arrayed in both his own and his Father's glory; nor attended by twelve weak

disciples, but surrounded by myriads of celestial spirits, with numberless hosts of mighty angels; nor should his rewards be the great offices and large possessions of a temporal kingdom, but the joys of immortality.

As this doctrine of Christ being appointed the universal Judge might appear incredible at that time, on account of his humiliation, he told them that some who heard him speak should not taste of death till they saw him coming in his kingdom. There are some here present that shall not die till they see a faint representation of the glory in which I shall come at the last day, and an eminent example of my power inflicted on the men of this sinful generation. To verify which prediction, the disciples lived to see their Master coming in his kingdom, when they were witnesses of his transfiguration, resurrection, and ascension, and had the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit conferred upon them,—lived to see Jerusalem with the Jewish state destroyed, and the gospel propagated through the greatest part of the then known world.

About eight days after this discourse, our blessed Saviour being with the multitude in the country of Cæsarea Phillipi, he left them in the plain, and, accompanied by Peter, James, and John, ascended an exceedingly high mountain.

In this solitude, while Jesus was praying with these three disciples, he was transfigured; his face became radiant and dazzling, for it shone like the sun in his meridian clearness. At the same time his garment acquired a snowy whiteness, far beyond any thing human art could produce,—a whiteness bright as the light, and sweetly refulgent, but in a degree inferior to the radiance of his countenance. Thus, as it were, for an instant, the Son of God, during his state of humiliation, suffered the glory of his divinity to shine through the veil of human nature with which it was covered; and to heighten the grandeur and solemnity of the scene, Moses, the great law-giver of Israel, and Elijah, a zealous defender of the laws, appeared in the beauties of immortality, the robes in which the inhabitants of the heavenly Canaan are adorned. The disciples, it seems, did not see the beginning of this

transfiguration; happening to fall asleep at the time of prayer, they lost that pleasure, together with a great part of the conversation which these two prophets held with the only-begotten Son of God.

They, however, understood that the subject was his meritorious sufferings and death, by which he was to redeem the world,—a subject that had a few days before given great offense to his disciples, particularly to Peter.

At beholding this illustrious sight, the disciples were greatly amazed; but the forwardness of Peter's disposition prompting him to say something, he uttered he knew not what: "Master," said he, "it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias." This disciple imagined that Jesus had now assumed his proper dignity; that Elias was come according to Malachi's prediction, and the Messiah's kingdom was at length begun. Accordingly, he thought it was necessary to provide some accommodation for his Master and his august assistants, intending, perhaps, to bring the rest of the disciples, with the multitude, from the plain below, to behold his matchless glory. This he thought was much better for his Master than to be put to death at Jerusalem, concerning which Jesus had been talking with the messengers from heaven, and the design of which Peter could not comprehend.

But, "while he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." When the three disciples heard the voice, which, like the roaring thunder, burst from the cloud, and was such as mortals were unaccustomed to hear, they fell on their faces, and continued in that posture till Jesus approached, who raised them up, and dispelled their fears; saying unto them, "Arise, and be not afraid. And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only."

Jesus having continued all night with his three disciples on the mountain, returned to the plain early in the morning, charging them to conceal what they had seen till after he was risen from the dead. He well knew that the world, and even

his own disciples, were not yet able to comprehend the design of his transfiguration; and that, if it had been published before his resurrection, it might have appeared incredible; because nothing but afflictions and persecutions had hitherto attended him. He was truly "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." But the doctrine of the resurrection, to which the transfiguration possibly alluded, was what the disciples were utterly unable to understand.

They had never learned that the Messiah was to die; far less that he was to be raised from the dead.

They were, on the contrary, persuaded that he was to abide for ever, and that his kingdom was to have no end: they were also greatly surprised at the sudden departure of Elias, and could not comprehend what the Scribes meant by affirming that he must appear before the Messiah would erect his empire. They, therefore, after long debating among themselves, asked their Master, "Why say the Scribes that Elias must first come?" To which Jesus answered, that Elias should truly come first, according to the prediction of Malachi, "and restore all things;" but at the same time, he assured them that Elias was already come, and described the treatment he had met with from that stiff-necked people; giving them to understand that he spake of John the Baptist.

When our Lord approached the descent of the mountain, accompanied by his three disciples, he saw a great multitude surrounding the nine who continued in the plain, and the Scribes disputing with them.

The people, seeing Jesus coming down from the mountain, ran to him, and saluted him with particular reverence; after which, Jesus asked the Scribes what was the subject of their debate with his disciples. To which one of the multitude answered, "Master, I have brought unto thee my son, who hath a dumb spirit; and wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him, and he foameth and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away; and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out, and they could not."

This answer being made by one of the multitude, and not by the Scribes, to whom the question was directed, indicates

that they had been disputing with the disciples on their not being able to cure this afflicted youth. Perhaps their making this unsuccessful attempt had given the Scribes occasion to boast that a devil was at length found, which neither they nor their Master were able to conquer.

This seems to be indicated by the manner in which our Saviour addressed himself to these arrogant rulers: "Oh, faithless generation!" said he, "how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you?" Will no miracles ever be able to convince you? Must I always bear with your infidelity? You have surely seen sufficient demonstrations of my power, notwithstanding ye still discover the most criminal infidelity. After speaking in this manner to the Scribes, he turned himself to the father of the young man, and said, "Bring thy son hither." But no sooner was he brought in sight of his deliverer, than the evil spirit attacked him, as it were, with double fury; "the spirit tare him, and he fell on the ground, and wallowed, foaming."

Jesus could easily have prevented this attack; but he permitted it, that the minds of the spectators might be impressed with a more lively idea of this youth's distress. And for the same reason, probably, it was that he asked the father how long he had been in this deplorable condition; to which the afflicted parent answered, "Of a child."

The inability of our Lord's disciples to cast out this spirit had greatly discouraged the afflicted father, and the exquisite torture of his son, and the remembrance of its long continuance, so dispirited him, that he began to fear this possession was even too great for the power of Jesus himself, as the Scribes had probably before affirmed, and therefore could not help expressing his doubts and fears.

But Jesus, to make him sensible of his mistake, said to him, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." On which the father cried out, with tears, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." The vehement manner in which he spake causing the crowd to gather from every quarter, Jesus "rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee to come out

of him, and enter no more into him." No sooner was the powerful order pronounced, than the spirit, with a hideous howling, and convulsing the suffering patient in the most deplorable manner, came out, leaving the youth senseless and without motion; till Jesus, taking him by the hand, restored him to life, and delivered him perfectly recovered to his father.

This miracle seems to have astonished the disciples more than any other one they had seen their Master perform; so that our Saviour found it necessary to moderate their high admiration of his works by again predicting his own death, and retiring for a time into the unfrequented parts of Galilee.

After a short tour through the desert part of it, Jesus returned into Capernaum, the place of his general residence. Soon after his arrival, the tax-gatherers came to Peter, and asked him whether his Master would pay the tribute. That disciple, it seems, had promised that Jesus would satisfy their demand; but on a more mature consideration, feared to ask him concerning his paying taxes on any pretense whatever. Jesus was, however, no stranger to what had happened, and the fear of Peter to ask him; and therefore turned his discourse to this subject, by saying unto him, "What thinkest thou, Simon? Of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or strangers? Peter saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus said unto him, Then are the children free;" insinuating that, as he was himself the Son of the great King, to whom heaven, earth, and the sea belong, he had no right to pay tribute to any monarch whatever, because he held nothing by a derived right. Or if we suppose this contribution was made for the service and reparation of the temple, he meant that, as he was himself the Son of that Omnipotent Being to whom the tribute was paid, he could justly have excused himself. But the blessed Jesus was always careful not to give offense, and therefore sent Peter to the lake with a line and a hook, telling him that in the mouth of the first fish that came up he should find money; "And when thou hast

opened his mouth," said he, "thou shalt find a piece of money; that take, and give unto them for me and thee."

Our Lord took this extraordinary method of paying the tribute-money in this manner, because the miracle was of such a kind as could not fail to demonstrate that he was the Son of the great Monarch worshiped in the temple, and who rules the universe. In the very manner, therefore, of paying this tribute, he showed Peter that he was free from all taxes, and at the same time gave this useful lesson to his followers, that when their property is affected only in a small degree, it is better to recede a little from their just right, than to offend their brethren, or disturb the state, by obstinately insisting on it.

Notwithstanding our blessed Saviour had lately foretold his own sufferings and death, and though these melancholy accounts had greatly afflicted the minds of his disciples, yet their grief was of no long continuance; for within a few days they forgot the predictions of their Master, and disputed with each other about the chief posts of honor and profit in the Messiah's kingdom. This debate was overheard by the blessed Jesus, though he did not mention it till after the tax-gatherers had retired, when he asked them what they were disputing about on the way.

This question rendered them all silent. They were fearful of discovering the cause that had given rise to the debate, as they knew it would draw on them a reprimand from their Master. Jesus, perceiving that they still continued silent, sat down, and ordered them all to stand round him, and attend to what he was going to deliver.

If any man, said the Saviour of the world, is ambitious of being the greatest person in my kingdom, let him endeavor to obtain that dignity by preferring others in honor, and doing to them all the good offices in his power. "If any man desire to be first," said he, "the same shall be last of all, and servant of all."

And, to demonstrate how truly acceptable the grace of humility is to the Almighty, he took a child in his arms, declaring that whoever humbled themselves like a little

child, and showed kindness to their fellow-creatures for his sake, should have the same kindness showed them in the great day of account, especially if they performed these worthy actions in obedience to his commands.

CHAPTER VII.

ATTENDS THE PASSOVER AT JERUSALEM; CALLS FORTH AND SENDS OUT SEVENTY DISCIPLES; RESIDES WITH MARTHA AND MARY, TWO OBSCURE WOMEN AT BETHANY; SUCCESS OF HIS MINISTRY BEYOND JORDAN.

AVING promoted his Father's work in Galilee, the great Redeemer departed into Judea, that the Jews who inhabited those distant parts might enjoy the unspeakable benefit of his discourses and miracles; and, after sowing the seeds of eternal life, and publishing the glad tidings of salvation in those remote countries, he repaired to Jerusalem, to celebrate the fourth passover; but the malignity of the Scribes and Pharisees was so great, that he staid but a short time in the capital, and then returned into Galilee, where the multitude again resorted to him, and he again instructed them in the paths that lead to everlasting life.

The feast of tabernacles now drew on, when all the males of the Jewish nation, capable of traveling, repaired to Jerusalem, and dwelt in the tabernacles, or booths, made of the boughs of trees, in commemoration of their fathers having had no other habitation during their forty years sojourning in the wilderness. To this feast some of the kinsmen of the blessed Jesus desired he would accompany them, and there show himself openly to the whole nation of the Jews.

They did not themselves believe that he was the great Prophet so long expected, and therefore condemned the method he pursued in his public ministry, as altogether absurd. They could not conceive what reasons he had for spending so much of his time in the deserts, and remote

corners of the kingdom, while he pretended to so public a character as that of the Redeemer of Israel. Jerusalem, the seat of power, was, in their opinion, much the properest place for him to deliver his doctrines and work his miracles in the most public manner possible, before the great and learned men of the nation, whose decision in his favor would have great weight in increasing the number of his disciples, and inducing the whole nation to own him for the Messiah.

Our Lord well knew the rancorous prejudice of the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and therefore did not think proper to reside among them any longer than was necessary. They had more than once attempted his life, and therefore very little hopes remained that they would believe his miracles or embrace his doctrine; but, on the contrary, there was great reason to think they would destroy him, if possible, before he had finished the work for which he assumed the veil of human nature, and resided among the sons of men. "My time," said the blessed Jesus to these unbelieving relations, "is not yet come; but your time is always ready. The world can not hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil. Go ye up unto this feast; I go not yet up unto this feast, for my time is not yet full come." As if he had said, it is not proper for me to go before the feast begins; but you may repair to the capital whenever you please: the Jews are your friends; you have done nothing to displease them; but the purity of the doctrines I have preached to them, and the freedom with which I have reproved their hypocrisy and other enormous crimes, have provoked their malice to its utmost height; and therefore, as the time of my sufferings is not yet come, it is not prudent for me to go so soon to Jerusalem.

There was also another reason why our blessed Saviour refused to accompany these relations to the feast of tabernacles; the roads were crowded with people, and these gathering round him, and accompanying him to Jerusalem, would doubtless have given offense to his enemies, and have in a great measure prevented his miracles and doctrines from having the desired effect. He therefore chose to continue in

Galilee, till the crowd were all gone up, when he followed, as it were in secret, neither preaching nor working miracles by the way, so that no crowd attended him to the feast. As Jesus did not go up openly to Jerusalem, so neither did he, on his arrival, repair to the temple, and there preach publicly to the people.

This gave occasion to several disputes among the Jews with regard to his true character.

Some affirmed that he was a true prophet, and that his absenting himself from the feast could be owing only to accident; while others as confidently asserted that he only deceived the people, and paid no regard to the institutions they had received from heaven.

But about the middle of the feast, Jesus appeared openly in the temple, and taught the people, delivering his doctrines with such strength of reason and elegance of expression, that his very enemies were astonished, knowing that he never enjoyed the advantages of a learned education.. The Jews marveled, saying, "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?"

To which the great Redeemer of mankind replied, My doctrine was not produced by human wisdom; the sages of the world were not my instructors; I received it from heaven; it is the doctrine of the Almighty, whose messenger I am. "My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent me." Nor can he who is desirous of practicing the doctrines I deliver, if he will lay aside his prejudices, and sincerely desire to be taught of God, be at a loss to know from whence my doctrines are derived; because he will easily discern whether they are conformable to the will of man or of God.

It is no difficulty to discover an impostor, because all his precepts will tend to advance his own interest and gratify his pride. Whereas, all the doctrines delivered by a true prophet have no other end but the glory of God, however contrary they may prove to himself.

While the blessed Jesus was thus instructing the people in the temple, the water from Siloam was brought in, according to the appointment of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah,

part of which they drank with loud acclamations, in commemoration of the mercy showed to their fathers, who were relieved by a stream which miraculously flowed from a rock, and refresned a whole nation, then ready to perish with thirst in a dreary and sandy waste; and the other part they poured out as a drink-offering to the Almighty, accompanying it with their prayers for the former or latter rain to fall in its season; the whole congregation singing the following passage: "With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation."

It was the custom of the blessed Jesus, to deliver moral instructions, in allusion to many occurrences that happened; and accordingly he took this opportunity of inviting, in the most affectionate manner, all who were desirous of knowledge or happiness, to come to him and drink, alluding to the ceremony they were then performing.

And to encourage all such as were desirous of believing in him, he promised them the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which he represented to them under the similitude of a river, whose refreshing streams were constantly flowing.

During this discourse to the people, the officers from the council came to apprehend him; but hearing that the topic he was discussing was a very singular one, and he seemed to deliver his discourse with remarkable fervor, their curiosity induced them to listen some time before they laid hands on him. But the eloquent manner in which he delivered his subject, appeased their rage; the sweetness of his pronunciation, and the plainness and perspicuity of his discourse, elucidated the beauties of truth, and caused them to shine before the understanding with their native lustre.

Accordingly, his very enemies, who were come from the council on purpose to apprehend him, were astonished; the greatness of the subject, made as it were visible by the divine speaker, filled their understandings; the warmth and tenderness with which he delivered himself penetrated their hearts; they felt new and uncommon emotions, and being overwhelmed with the greatness of their admiration, were fixed in silence and astonishment; condemned themselves for

having undertaken the office, and soon returned to the rulers of Israel without performing it.

If our Lord had pleaded for his life before the officers of the council, who were sent to apprehend him, the success of his eloquence, even in that case, had been truly wonderful; but in the case before us, it surely was superior to all praise; for in a discourse addressed to others, and even on a spiritual subject, it disarmed a band of inveterate enemies, and made them as friends.

The officers returning to the council, were asked why they had not brought Jesus of Nazareth; to whom the officers answered, "Never man spake like this man." This reply enraged the council, who reviled them for presuming to entertain a favorable opinion of one whom they had pronounced an impostor. It is strange, said they, that you, who are not ignorant of our sentiments concerning this person, should entertain a favorable idea of him.

Have any persons of rank, or celebrated for their knowledge of the laws, believed on him?

Are not his followers the lower order of the people, who are totally ignorant of all the prophecies concerning the Messiah?

The officers made no answer to these railing accusations of their masters; but Nicodemus, a member of the council, arraigned their conduct in a very poignant manner. "Does our law," said he, "condemn any man before he has been heard?" They had before condemned their officers for being ignorant of the law, when it appeared they were themselves far more ignorant, in pretending to condemn a person before they had proved him guilty. They were acting directly contrary to the fundamental principles of the law of equity, at the time they boasted of their profound knowledge of its precepts.

Incensed at this reprimand of Nicodemus, they asked him, with an air of disdain and surprise, if he was also one of those mean persons who had joined together to support the pretenses of a Galilean; though the Scripture had plainly said that Bethlehem was the place of the Messiah's nativity;

adding, that if he refused to listen to them, he should soon be convinced that the great Prophet mentioned by Moses will not be born in Galilee. "Art thou also of Galilee?" said they. "Search, and look; for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet."

Having made this reply to Nicodemus, the council broke up, and Jesus, who well knew their malicious intentions, retired to the Mount of Olives, where he spent the night with his disciples. Early the following morning, however, he returned to the temple, and again taught the people; asserting the divinity of his mission, and declaring the happy effects of faith, and obedience to the gospel.

The great Preacher of Israel having defeated the cruel designs of the obstinate Jews, in passing on his way, saw a man who had been blind from his birth. The sight of so affecting an object could not fail to elicit the Saviour's compassion. Nor could the affronts and indignities he had just received from the Jews, hinder him from "working the works of Him that sent him," and dispensing blessings on that rebellious and ungrateful nation.

Accordingly, he beheld this poor blind man, not with a transient view, but fixed on him the eyes of pity, and presented him with the riches of his adorable love.

The disciples observing the affectionate regard of their Master to this object of compassion, and probably imagining that he was going to extend his usual mercy to this unfortunate object, asked their Master whether his blindness was occasioned by his own sin, or the sin of his parents. Their Master kindly answered, that neither his own nor the sins of his parents were the immediate cause of this peculiar punishment; but that he was born blind, "that the works of God should be made manifest in him;" particularly his sovereignty in bringing him blind into the world, his power of conferring the faculty of sight upon him, and his goodness in bearing witness to the doctrine by which men are to be saved. We may learn by this pertinent reply of the Saviour of the world, that a curious inquiry into the afflictions of other men may be safely avoided; and that we ought to

suppose every calamity subservient to the glory of Omnipotence, never imputing to their personal sins whatever miseries we behold in others, lest, like the disciples in the present case, we assign that to sin, which owes its origin to the glory of our Maker.

Having assigned the cause of this person's blindness,—namely, "that the works of God should be made manifest in him,"—Jesus added, "I must work the works of Him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work,"—intimating to his disciples and all the sons of men, his unwearied labor in the work of his Almighty Father. In this he was occupied day and night, during the time of his sojourning in the flesh. To this alone he directed all his thoughts and all his intentions; this he esteemed even as his meat and drink; and for this he suffered the neglect of his ordinary food, that he might finish the blessed, the beneficent work of human salvation,—a work, to accomplish which, he left the courts of heaven, and, during the execution of it, went about doing good. It was now the Sabbath day, and the blessed Jesus was going to perform a miracle, in which there was to be a small degree of servile work; and therefore he told his disciples that they need not be surprised to see him work miracles of that kind on the Sabbath day; for though they should imagine that he might defer them till the day of rest was over, his time on earth was so short, that it was necessary for him to embrace every opportunity that offered. Perhaps he chose to perform this work on the Sabbath, because he knew the Pharisees would, for that reason, inquire into it with the utmost attention, and consequently render it more generally known. But, however this be, our blessed Saviour, who was now going to confer sight upon one that was born blind, took occasion from thence to speak of himself as one appointed to give light also to the minds of men involved in darkness.

It appears from hence that our Saviour's miracles were designed not only as proofs of his mission, but also as specimens of the power he possessed as the Messiah.

For example, by feeding the multitude with the meat that

perished, he signified that he was to come to quicken and nourish mankind with the bread of life, that sovereign cordial and salutary nutriment of the soul. His giving sight to the blind was a lively emblem of the efficacy of his doctrine to illuminate the blinded understandings of men. His healing their bodies represented his power to heal their souls, and was a specimen of his authority to forgive sins, as it was a real, though a partial, removal of its punishment. His casting out devils was an earnest of his final victory over Satan and all his powers. His raising particular persons from the dead was the beginning of his triumph over death, and a demonstration of his ability to accomplish a general resurrection; and, in a word, his curing all promiscuously who applied to him, showed that he was not come to condemn the world, but to save even the chief of sinners. Accordingly, at, or soon after performing these miracles, when the memory of them was fresh in the minds of his hearers, we often find him turning his discourse to the spiritual things they represented.

Having declared the salutary design of his coming into the world, "he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is, by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way, therefore, and washed, and came seeing."

From former examples, it is evident that our Saviour could as easily have performed this miracle without the assistance of any external means. Indeed, those the great Redeemer made use of on this occasion were so far from being likely to effect a cure, that they seemed properly adapted to produce a quite contrary effect.

We must therefore conclude that they were intended to direct our attention to higher mysteries, and show us, as in a glass, that it is no other than the same divine person who at first created man out of the dust of the earth, and gave sight to his eyes, that now restores and regenerates lapsed mankind, and opens the eyes closed with the black cement of sin.

This miraculous operation could not fail of producing a

general curiosity and surprise, and induced those who had seen this blind man in his dark and deplorable condition, to be very particular in their inquiries into the means of so singular a miracle. Unbelief and hardness of heart led some of them even to doubt of the plainest fact—a fact the most evident and indisputable, and plainly the work of the divinity; and others to persecute at once both the object and the author of it!

The man, transported with gratitude and joy, perceiving his neighbors doubted the identity of his person, proclaimed himself to be the very same whom they lately saw begging in total darkness. His bold acknowledgment of Jesus, and his divine power, excited the envy and malice of the proud Pharisees, who, finding all attempts either to discredit or disprove the fact, useless, had recourse to their usual method of calumniating the author of it; and finally "cast him out,"—that is, passed on him the sentence of excommunication, which was the highest punishment they had power to inflict.

The feast of dedication now drew near. This solemnity was not appointed by Moses, but by that heroic reformer, Judas Maccabeus, in commemoration of his having cleansed the temple, and restored its worship, after both had been polluted by Antiochus Epiphanes. Although this feast was merely of human institution, Jesus determined to be present at it, even though he knew further attempts would be made against his life. His public ministry was indeed now drawing near its period; and therefore the blessed Jesus would not omit any opportunity of preaching to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and of doing good to the children of men. Nor did he now, as he had formerly done, travel privately to the capital, but openly declared his intention of going to Jerusalem, and set forward on his journey with great courage and resolution.

Jesus, in the course of his wandering, met with one who had formerly been his disciple, and ordered him to disengage himself from all worldly employments, and to follow him; but he was desirous of excusing himself for the present, under the pretense that he was bound by the ties of gratitude

to continue with his aged father till death, and he had laid his remains in the sepulchre of his ancestors. "Lord," said he, "suffer me first to go and bury my father." To which Jesus answered, "Let the dead bury their dead; but go thou and preach the kingdom of God." Let those that are immersed in worldly affairs, follow the affairs of the world; but those who have embraced the doctrines of the gospel, do every thing in their power to spread the glad tidings of salvation in every part of the world.

Another person offered to follow him, provided he would give him the liberty to return to his house, and take leave of his family; but Jesus told him that he should not suffer any domestic affairs to interfere with the care of his salvation; that the calls of religion were too pressing to admit of the least delay or excuse whatever, and that all who set themselves to seek the welfare of their souls, should pursue the work assiduously, without looking carelessly around them, as if they were regardless of the work they had undertaken to perform.

As our blessed Saviour's ministry was from this time till its final period confined to Judea and the countries beyond Jordan, it was necessary that some harbingers should be sent into every town and village he was to visit, to prepare his way. Accordingly, he called his seventy disciples unto him, and, after instructing them in the duties of their mission, and the particulars to observe in their journey, he sent them into different parts of the country, to those particular places whither he himself intended to follow them, and preach the gospel to the inhabitants. Our Lord, according to his own declaration, despatched these disciples on the same important errand as he had done the twelve before. As some consolation, he told them, "He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me." Such a token of heavenly regard could not fail of comforting the seventy, and alleviating their minds, when thinking of the ill-usage they expected to meet with during the course of their mission. They well knew that the preaching of Christ himself had been

often despised, and often unsuccessful, with respect to many of his hearers; and therefore they had no very great reason to expect that they should find a more welcome reception than their Master.

The feast of the dedication being near, Jesus turned his course hither, and in the evening came to the house of Martha and Mary, the sisters of Lazarus, at Bethany. Martha was desirous of expressing her regard for the divine guest, by providing for him and his disciples the best entertainment in her power. But her sister, who was of a more contemplative disposition, sat quietly at the feet of Jesus, listening with the utmost attention to his doctrine. For the great Redeemer of mankind never omitted any opportunity of declaring the gracious offers of the Almighty, and his unspeakable love for the children of men. Martha being greatly fatigued with the burden of the service, complained to Jesus of the little care Mary took to assist her.

But Martha's officiousness incurred our Lord's reproof, who commended Mary for her attentive application to his doctrine, by saying, "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

At the feast of dedication, Jesus was informed that the beggar he had restored to sight at the feast of the tabernacles, was by the council cast out of the synagogue. This information excited the pity of the Son of God, and he resolved to make amends to him for the injury he had suffered.

It was not long before he met the suffering person, and said to him, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshiped him."

It has before been hinted, that the beggar was thoroughly convinced that the person who opened his eyes was a messenger from heaven; it is therefore no wonder that as soon as

he knew Jesus was the person who had performed so great a work, he readily believed him to be the Son of God.

Our Saviour on this, as on all occasions, taught the people the superiority of his doctrines, and the fullness and freeness of his salvation.

The feast being over, Jesus departed from Jerusalem, and returned into the parts of Perea, beyond Jordan.

Here his ministry was attended with great success; for the inhabitants of the country, remembering what had been told them by John the Baptist concerning Jesus, and being sensible that the doctrine and miracles of our blessed Saviour were fully equal to what the Baptist had foretold, firmly believed him to be the Messiah.

CHAPTER VIII.

RELIEVES AN AFFLICTED WOMAN, WHO HAD BEEN DISEASED EIGHTEEN YEARS; APPLIED TO IN BEHALF OF LAZARUS; RESTORES HIM TO LIFE; EXCITEMENT OF THE PEOPLE; COUNCIL CALLED TO RESOLVE TO PUT HIM TO DEATH.

STILL surrounded by a multitude of people, Jesus continued his teachings, charging his disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees—hypocrisy—because all their actions would be brought to light, either in this world, or that which is to come; and therefore exhorted them to be very careful never to do any thing which could not bear the light, but to let the whole of their behavior be honest, just, and good.

To animate his followers to perseverance, he admonished them to look forward unto the general judgment, when he would acknowledge them as his servants, provided they acknowledged him in this world as their Master, and cheerfully and constantly obeyed his commands; but if they were ashamed of him and his doctrines before the sons of men, he would disown them before the celestial host.

He also cautioned his disciples not to be perplexed with

regard to an answer, when they should be brought before the rulers of the people, because they should be inspired by the Spirit of God.

While delivering these exhortations to his disciples, a certain person among the multitude begged him that he would interpose his authority with his brother, in order to oblige him to divide their paternal inheritance between them; but as this decision properly belonged to the magistrates, our blessed Saviour, who came into the world to redeem the souls of mankind, and to purchase for them an eternal, not a temporal inheritance, declined the office.

He, however, embraced the opportunity of giving his hearers the most solemn caution against covetousness; declaring that neither the length nor the happiness of human life had any dependence on the largeness of possessions.

To excite their comparative negligence of the things of this life, he placed before them in the strongest light an example of the bewitching influence of wealth, in the parable of the rich man who was cut off in the midst of his projects, and became a remarkable instance of the folly of amassing the goods of this life, without having any regard to the commands of the Almighty. This wretched man, forgetting his own mortality, made preparations for a long and luxurious life, pleasing himself with the thoughts of possessing an inexhaustible fund of sensual enjoyments. But, alas! while he was providing repositories for his riches, the inexorable king of terrors seized him, and that very night hurried him before the awful tribunal of Omnipotence.

Having spoken this parable, our Lord proceeded to caution his disciples against anxious cares for the things of this world; from a consideration that the care of God's providence extends to every part of creation.

The fowls of heaven are fed by his bounty, and the lilies that adorn the valleys are supplied with rain from the clouds of heaven; if, therefore, said the Saviour, Omnipotence so carefully provides for the inferior parts of creation, the children of men have surely reason to rely on his bounty, and depend for subsistence on his merciful hand.

He added, that as God had called them to everlasting happiness in a future life, he would surely provide for them all the necessities of the present.

Having thus recommended to them the disengagement of their affections from the things of this world, he exhorted them to labor after improvement in grace; enforcing constant watchfulness and habitual preparation, by reminding them of the uncertainty of his coming, telling his disciples that, as every master of a family, if he knew the coming of the thief, would make some preparation against a surprise, so it would be highly requisite for them to make some preparation for the approach of their Master, and be always ready to receive him, as the time of his coming was uncertain.

During the stay of Jesus in the country of Perea, he observed, while he was preaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath day, a woman who, during the space of eighteen years, had been unable to stand upright.

A daughter of Abraham laboring under so terrible a disorder, could not fail of finding sympathy in the heart of the compassionate Saviour. He beheld this affecting object; he pitied her deplorable condition; he removed her complaint. She who came into the synagogue bowed down with an infirmity, was, by the all-powerful word of the Son of God, restored to her natural health, and returned to her house, upright and full of vigor. Such a display of divine power and goodness, instead of exciting the gratitude, so highly offended the master of the synagogue, that he openly testified his displeasure, and reproved the people as Sabbath-breakers, because they came on that day to be healed.

But our blessed Saviour soon silenced this hypocritical Pharisee, by showing that he had not deviated from their own avowed practice. They made no scruple of loosing their cattle, and leading them to water on that day, because the mercy of the action sufficiently justified them for performing it. And surely this daughter of Abraham, that had been bound by an incurable distemper during the tedious space of eighteen years, was abundantly justified; nor could this bigoted ruler have thought otherwise, had not his reason

been blinded by his superstition. Our Lord having reproved the superstition of the ruler of the synagogue, and observing the acclamations of the people, then proceeded to demonstrate the reason and truth which so effectually supported his kingdom. He repeated the parables of the grain of mustard seed and of the leaven, to show the efficacious operations of the gospel upon the minds of the children of men, and its rapid progress through the world, notwithstanding all the opposition of its most inveterate enemies.

The great Redeemer having now planted the seeds of the gospel in the country of Perea, crossed the Jordan, and traveled by slow journeys toward Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in every village, and declaring the glad tidings of salvation to all the inhabitants of those countries.

While he was thus laboring for the salvation of mankind, one of the persons who accompanied him, asked him, "Lord, are they few that be saved?" In all probability, the person who proposed this question had heard the Son of God describe the success of the gospel, by the parables of the mustard-seed and of the leaven: and his notions of the kingdom of the Messiah being those that were then entertained by the Jews in general, he meant a temporal salvation.

But Jesus, to convince him that he never intended to erect a temporal kingdom, answered the question in a spiritual manner, and told him that a small number only of the Jews would be saved! exhorting them to embrace the offers of mercy before it was too late; for that many, after the period of their trial was concluded, and their state finally and irreversibly determined, should earnestly desire these benevolent offers, but should be denied their request.

"Strive," said he, "to enter in at the straight gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."

It was in this connection he delivered the parable of the prodigal son, which beautifully represents the work of grace on the heart of man, from the first conviction of sin to the absolute confession of it; showing, at the same time, there can be no true confession without a thorough consciousness

of guilt, a sense of our lost state, and an entire reliance on the mercy of God, through Christ our Lord.

Soon after the Saviour had finished these discourses, one of his friends, named Lazarus, fell sick at Bethany, a village about two miles from the countries beyond Jordan, where Jesus was now preaching the gospel.

The sisters of Lazarus, finding his sickness was of a dangerous kind, thought proper to send an account of it to Jesus; being firmly persuaded that he who had cured so many strangers, would readily come and give health to one whom he loved in so tender a manner. "Lord," said they, "behold, he whom thou lovest is sick;" they did not add, come down and heal him; make haste, and save him from the grave; it was sufficient for them to relate their necessities to their Lord, who was both able and willing to help them in their distress. "When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death." This declaration of the benevolent Jesus, being carried to the sisters of Lazarus, must have strangely surprised them, and exercised both their and his disciples' faith; since it is probable that before the messenger arrived at Bethany, Lazarus had expired. Soon after, Jesus positively assured his disciples that "Lazarus was dead."

The evangelist, in the beginning of this account, tells us that Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus; and also that after he had received the message, he remained two days in the same place where he was. His design in this might be to intimate that his lingering so long after the message came, did not proceed from a want of concern for his friends, but happened according to the counsels of his own wisdom. For the length of time which Lazarus lay in the grave, put his death beyond all possibility of doubt, removed every suspicion of fraud, and consequently afforded Jesus a fit opportunity of displaying the love he bore to Lazarus, as well as his own divine power, in his undoubted resurrection from the dead.

His sisters, indeed, were by this means kept awhile in painful suspense, on account of their brother's life, and at last, pierced by the sorrows of seeing him die; yet they must

surely think themselves abundantly recompensed, by the evidence accruing to the gospel from his astonishing miracle, as well as by the inexpressible surprise of joy they felt when they again received their brother from the dead.

Two days being thus expired, Jesus said to his disciples, "Let us go into Judea again." His disciples were astonished at this proposal, and the recollection of his late danger in that country alarmed them: "Master," said they, "the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?" "Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him." By this he intended to inform his disciples that those who lived by faith, and acted under the infallible influences of the Divine Spirit, could not stumble; whereas, those who followed the directions of unenlightened reason, were liable to perpetual error.

Jesus having removed their groundless apprehensions, and strengthened their faith, that he might clearly explain to them the cause of his going into Judea again, told them, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep." The disciples, understanding his discourse in a literal manner, replied, "Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well;" his distemper is abated, and he in all probability is recovering. It would be therefore highly unreasonable in us to take two days' journey only to awaken him out of sleep.

Thus they discovered their fears, and hinted to their Master that it would be safer to continue where they were than to take a hazardous journey into Judea.

They were, however, mistaken; for the evangelist informs us that he "spake of his death;" but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Jesus, therefore, to remove any doubt, said plainly to them, "Lazarus is dead; and I am glad for your sakes I was not there, to the intent that ye might not believe." I am glad for your sakes I was not in Judea before he died; for had I been there, and restored him to his health, your faith in me, as the Messiah,

must have wanted the great confirmation it shall now receive, by your beholding me raise him from the dead.

Having thus given his disciples a proof of his divine knowledge, and of the designs of Providence in the death of Lazarus, our blessed Saviour added, "Nevertheless, let us go unto him." Thus Jesus, who could have raised Lazarus without opening his lips, or rising from his seat, leaves his place of retirement beyond Jordan, and takes a journey into Judea, where the Jews lately attempted to kill him; because his being present in person, and raising Lazarus again to life, before so many witnesses in Bethany, where he died, and was so well known, would be the means of bringing the men of that place, as well as others, who should hear of it, even in future ages, to receive the doctrine of a resurrection to eternal life; an admirable proof, and as an emblem of which, he gave them this great miracle.

The journey to Judea being thus resolved on, Jesus departed with his disciples, and in his way to Bethany, passed through Samaria and Galilee. "And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off: and they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us! And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go, show yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that as they went, they were cleansed." Among these miserable objects, one of them was a native of the country, who, perceiving that his cure was completed, came back, praising God for the great mercy he had received; he had before kept at a distance from the Saviour, but being now sensible that he was entirely clean, approached his benefactor, that all might have an opportunity of beholding the miracle, and fell on his face at his feet, thanking him in the most humble manner for his condescension in healing him of so terrible a disease. Jesus, in order to intimate that those who were enlightened with the knowledge of the truth, ought, at least, to have shown as great a sense of piety and gratitude as this Samaritan, asked, "Were there not ten cleansed? where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger."

Surely the mission of Jesus was emphatically one of mercy. Jesus and his disciples now continued their journey toward Bethany, where he was informed by some of the inhabitants of that village, that Lazarus was not only dead, as he had foretold, but had now lain in the grave four days.

The afflicted sisters were overwhelmed with sorrow, so that many of the Jews from Jerusalem came to comfort them concerning their brother. It seems the news of our Lord's coming had reached Bethany, before he arrived at that village; for Martha, the sister of Lazarus, being informed of his approach, went out and met him; but Mary, who was of a more melancholy and contemplative disposition, sat still in the house. No sooner was she come into the presence of Jesus, than in an excess of grief, she poured forth her complaints: "Lord," said she, "if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died."

Martha, doubtless, entertained a high opinion of our Saviour's power; she believed that death did not dare to approach his presence, and, consequently, if Jesus had arrived at Bethany before her brother's dissolution, he had not fallen a victim to the king of terrors; but she imagined that it was not in his power to heal the sick at a distance; though at the same time, she seemed to have some dark and imperfect hopes that her blessed Lord would still do something for her. She doubtless knew that he had raised the daughter of Jairus, and the widow's son at Nain, from the dead; but seems to have considered her brother's resurrection as much more difficult, because he had been longer dead. But Jesus, who was willing to encourage this imperfect faith of Martha, answered, "Thy brother shall rise again." As these words were delivered in an indefinite sense with regard to time, she understood them only as an argument of consolation, drawn from the general resurrection of the dead; at which important hour she believed her brother would rise from the chambers of the dust. Here she seems to have terminated all her hopes, not thinking that the Son of God would call her brother from the sleep of death.

Jesus, therefore, to instruct her in this great truth, replied,

"I am the resurrection and the life,"—and therefore with the same ease can raise the dead now, as at the last day.

Martha now seemed to entertain some confused expectations of her brother's immediate resurrection; and leaving Jesus in the field, ran and called her sister, according to his order, being willing that both Mary and her companions should be witnesses of this stupendous miracle. Mary no sooner heard that Jesus was come, than she immediately left her Jewish comforters, who only increased the weight of her grief, and flew to her Saviour; and the Jews, who suspected she was going to weep over the grave of her brother, followed her to that great Prophet, who was going to remove all her sorrows.

Thus the Jews, who came from Jerusalem to comfort the two mournful sisters, were brought to the grave of Lazarus, and made witnesses of his resurrection.

As soon as Mary approached the blessed Redeemer, she fell prostrate at his feet, and in a flood of tears poured out her complaints, in the same words her sister had used. No wonder the compassionate Jesus was moved at so affecting a scene; on his side stood Martha, pouring forth a flood of tears; at his feet lay the affectionate Mary, weeping and lamenting her dear, departed brother; while the Jews who came to comfort the afflicted sisters, unable to confine their grief, joined the solemn mourning, and mixed their friendly tears in witness of their love for the departed, and in testimony to the justice of the sisters' grief for the loss of so amiable and deserving a brother.

Jesus could not behold the affliction of the two sisters and their friends, without having a share in it himself: his heart was melted at the mournful scene; "he groaned in spirit, and was troubled." To remove the doubts and fears of these pious women, he asked them where they had buried Lazarus: not that he was ignorant where the body of the deceased was laid; he who knew that he was dead when so far distant from him, and could raise him up by a single word, must know where his remains were deposited; to which they answered, "Lord, come and see." The Son of God, now, to

prove that he was not only God, but a most compassionate man, and to show us that the tender affections of a human heart, when kept in due bounds,—that friendly sorrow, when not immoderate, and directed to improper ends, is consistent with the highest sanctity of the soul—joined in the general mourning. He wept, even at the time that he was going to give the most ample proof of his divinity. By his weeping, the Jews were convinced that he loved Lazarus exceedingly; but some of them interpreted this circumstance to his disadvantage; for according to their mean way of judging, they fancied that he had suffered him to fall by the stroke of death, for no other reason in the world but for want of power to rescue him.

And thinking the miracle said to have been wrought on the blind man, at the feast of tabernacles, at least as difficult as the curing an acute distemper, they called the former in question, because the latter had been neglected: "Could not this man," said they, "which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?"

Our Lord, regardless of their question, but grieved at the hardness of their hearts, and blindness of their infidelity, groaned again within himself, as he walked toward the sepulchre of the dead. At his coming to the grave, he said, "Take ye away the stone." To which Martha answered, "Lord, by this time he stinketh; for he hath been dead four days."

She meant to insinuate that her brother's resurrection was not now to be expected.

But Jesus gave her a solemn reproof, to teach her that there was nothing impossible with God; and that the power of the Almighty is not to be circumscribed within the narrow bounds of human reason: "Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?" that is, Have but faith, and I will display before thee the power of Omnipotence.

The objections of Martha being thus obviated, she, with the rest, waited the great event in silence; and in pursuance of the command of the Son of God, took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. Jesus had, on many

occasions, publicly appealed to his own miracles as the proofs of his mission, though he did not generally make a formal address to his Father, before he worked those miracles.

But being now to raise Lazarus from the dead, he prayed for his resurrection, to convince the spectators that it could not be effected without an immediate interposition of the divine power. "Father," said he, "I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always; but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me." After returning thanks to his Father, for this opportunity of displaying his glory, "he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth!"

This loud and efficacious call of the Son of God awakened the dead; the breathless clay was instantly reanimated; and he who had lain four days in the tomb, obeyed immediately the powerful sound.

"Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go."

There is something extremely beautiful in our Lord's behavior on this occasion; he did not utter one upbraiding word, either to the doubting sisters or the malicious Jews, nor did he let fall one word of triumph or exultation. "Loose him, and let him go," were the only words we have recorded. He was in this, as on all other occasions, consistent with himself—a pattern of perfect humility and modesty.

Such was the astonishing work wrought by Jesus at Bethany; and in the resurrection of Lazarus, thus corrupted, and thus raised by a powerful, divine call, we have a striking emblem and a glorious earnest of the resurrection of our bodies from the grave at the last day, when the same powerful mandate which spoke Lazarus again into being, shall collect the scattered particles of our bodies, and raise them to immortality.

Such an extraordinary power, displayed before the face of a multitude, and near to Jerusalem, even overcame the prejudices of some of the most obstinate among them. Many believed that Jesus could be no other than the great Messiah so long promised; though others, who still expected a temporal prince, and were therefore unwilling to acknowledge

him for their Saviour, were filled with indignation, particularly the chief priests and elders.

But this miracle, as well as all the rest he had wrought in confirmation of his mission, was too evident to be denied; and therefore they pretended that his whole intention was to establish a new sect in religion, which would endanger both their church and nation.

Accordingly, they called a council, and came to a resolution to put him to death. This resolution was not, however, unanimous, for Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, and other disciples of the Saviour, then members of the council, urged the injustice of what they proposed to do, from the consideration of his miracles and his innocence.

But Caiaphas, the high priest, from a principle of human policy, told them that the nature of government often required certain acts of injustice in order to procure the safety of the state.

The council having thus determined to put Jesus to death, deliberated for the future only upon the best methods of effecting it; and in all probability agreed to issue a proclamation, promising a reward to any person who would deliver him into their hands.

For this reason our blessed Saviour did not go up to Jerusalem, though he was within two miles of it; but went to Ephraim, a city on the borders of the wilderness, where he abode with his disciples, being unwilling to go too far into the country, because the passover at which he was to suffer was now at hand.

CHAPTER IX.

BLESSES CHILDREN AS EMBLEMS OF HEAVENLY TEMPER; DECLARES THE WAY OF SALVATION TO THE RULER; RESTORES SIGHT TO THE BLIND; MAKES A PUBLIC ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM; PREDICTS THE DESOLATION OF THE TEMPLE; IS ANOINTED BY A POOR WOMAN.

HILE the blessed Jesus remained in retirement on the borders of the wilderness, he was desired by some of the Pharisees to inform them when the Messiah's kingdom would commence. Nor is their anxiety on that account a matter of surprise; for as they entertained very exalted notions of his coming in pomp and magnificence, it was natural for them to be very desirous of having his empire speedily erected. But our Saviour, to correct this mistaken notion, told them that the Messiah's kingdom did not consist in any external form of government, erected in some particular country by terror of arms and the desolation of war, but in the subjection of the minds of men, and in rendering them conformable to the laws of the Almighty, which was to be effected by a new dispensation of religion, and this dispensation was already begun. It was therefore needless for them to seek in this or that place for the kingdom of God, as it had been already preached among them by Christ and his apostles, and confirmed by innumerable miracles.

Having thus addressed the Pharisees, he turned himself to his disciples, and, in the hearing of all the people, prophesied the destruction of the Jewish state; whose constitution, both religious and civil, was the chief difficulty that opposed the erection of his kingdom.

But because love and compassion were eminent parts of our Saviour's temper, he mentioned that dreadful catastrophe in such a manner as might tend to the reformation and profit of his hearers. He informed them that the prelude to this final destruction would be a state of universal distress; when

they should passionately wish for the personal presence of the Messiah to comfort them, but would be denied their request.

Having foretold the destruction of Jerusalem, he spake the following parable, in order to excite them to a constant perseverance in prayer, and not to be so weary and faint in their minds, as to neglect or wholly omit this necessary duty.

There was in a city, said the Saviour of the world, a judge, who, being governed by atheistical principles, had no regard to the precepts of religion, and being very powerful, did not regard what was said of him by any man; so that all his decisions were influenced merely by passion or interest. In the same city was also a widow, who, having no friends to assist her, was absolutely unable to defend herself from injuries, or procure redress for any she had received. In this deplorable situation, she had recourse to the unjust judge, in order to obtain satisfaction for some oppressive wrong she had lately received; but the judge was so abandoned to pleasure, that he refused, for a time, to listen to her request; he would not give himself the trouble to examine her case, though the crying injustice pleaded so powerfully for this distressed widow. She was not, however, intimidated by his refusal; she incessantly importuned him, till, by repeated representations of her distress, she filled his mind with such displeasing ideas, that he was obliged to do her justice, merely to free himself from her importunity. The sentiment conveyed in this parable is very beautiful. We hence learn that the cries of the afflicted will, by being incessantly repeated, make an impression even on the stony hearts of wicked men, who glory in their impiety, and laugh at all the precepts of justice, virtue, and religion; and therefore can not fail of being regarded by the benevolent Father of the universe, who listens to the petitions of his faithful servants, and pours on their heads the choicest of his blessings. "Hear," said the blessed Jesus, "what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily."

The Saviour having, in the course of his ministry, performed innumerable cures in different parts of the country, several persons, who earnestly desired that his blessing might rest upon their offspring as well as themselves, brought their children to him, desiring that he would put his hands upon them, and bless them.

The disciples, however, mistaking the intention, were angry with the persons, and rebuked them for endeavoring to give this trouble to their Master.

But Jesus no sooner saw it, than he was greatly displeased with his disciples, and ordered them not to hinder parents from bringing their children to him. "Suffer little children," said he, "to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God." Such are those in a spiritual light, who are brought to a sense of their sins, and are humbled for them in the sight of God.

As the period of our blessed Saviour's passion was now approaching, he departed from Ephraim, and repaired by the way of Jericho toward Jerusalem: but before he arrived at Jericho, a ruler of the synagogue came running to him, and, kneeling down before him, asked him, "Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" This young magistrate or ruler pretended to pay great honor to the Redeemer, yet the whole was no more than a piece of raillery, as it appears from his unwillingness to obey him. Jesus well knew his secret intentions, and beheld the inmost recesses of his soul; and accordingly rebuked him for his hypocritical address, before he answered the question. The Saviour, willing to make him sensible of his secret desire of possessing the riches of this world, told him that, if he aimed at perfection, he should distribute his possessions among the poor and indigent, and become his disciple. His heart, however, being set upon his worldly treasures, he had no inclination to a religion that enjoins self-denial and parting with our darling sins, and "went away sorrowful."

This melancholy instance of the pernicious influence of riches over the minds of the children of men, induced the Saviour to caution his disciples against fixing their minds on

things of such frightful tendency, by showing how very difficult it was for a rich man to procure a habitation in the regions of eternal happiness, in which discourse he used the striking figure of a "camel" passing through a needle's eye.

Jesus, with his disciples and the multitude that accompanied him, were now arrived at Jericho, a famous city of Palestine, and the second in the kingdom. Near this town Jesus cured two blind men, who sat by the road, begging, and expressed their belief in him as the Messiah. After conferring sight upon them, Zaccheus, chief of the publicans, having often heard the fame of our Saviour's miracles, was desirous of seeing his person; but the lowness of his stature preventing him from satisfying his curiosity, "he ran before, and climbed up a sycamore-tree to see him; for he was to pass that way." As Jesus approached the place where he was, "he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zaccheus, make haste, and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house."

The publican expressed his joy at our Lord's condescension to visit him, took him to his house, and showed him all the marks of civility in his power.

Here our Lord availed himself of the opportunity of proclaiming divine truth, and having taught them, he left the house, and continued his journey toward Jerusalem, where he proposed to celebrate the passover, and was earnestly expected by the people, who came up to purify themselves, and who began to doubt whether he would venture to come to the feast. This delay, however, was occasioned by the proclamation issued by the chief priests, promising a reward to any who would discover the place of his retirement.

Six days before the passover, Jesus arrived at Bethany, and repaired to the house of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. "There they made him a supper, and Martha served; but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him."

Mary, with usual devotion and humility, took a costly ointment, and anointed the feet of Jesus, wiping them with the hair of her head; "and the house was filled with the

odor of the ointment." Acceptable offering indeed to the blessed Jesus, because prompted by a loving heart.

The covetous spirit of Judas Iscariot professed regret at the seeming waste, when it might have benefited the poor; but our Lord, knowing his motives, rebuked him, and commended the act of the woman.

As Bethany was not above two miles from Jerusalem, the news of his arrival was soon spread through the capital, and great numbers of the citizens came to see Lazarus, who had been raised from the dead, together with the great Prophet who had wrought so stupendous a miracle; and many of them were convinced both of the resurrection of the former, and the divinity of the latter; but the news of their conversion, together with the reason of it, being currently reported in Jerusalem, the chief priests were soon sensible of the weight so great a miracle must have on the minds of the people; and therefore determined, if possible, to put both Lazarus and Jesus to death.

Our blessed Lord, though he knew the design of the Jews upon him, also knew that it became him to fulfill all righteousness, and was so far from declining to visit Jerusalem, that he even entered it in a public manner, and that too amid the joyful acclamations and loud hozannas of a multitude of people.

As our blessed Saviour drew near the city, surrounded by the rejoicing crowd, notwithstanding the many affronts he had there received, he beheld the city with a divine generosity and benevolence which nothing can equal, wept over it, and, in the most pathetic manner, lamented the calamities which he foresaw were coming upon it, because its inhabitants were ignorant of the time of their visitation.

"If," said he, "thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes."

Behold here, ye wondering mortals, behold an example of generosity infinitely superior to any furnished by the heathen world; an example highly worthy for them to imitate and admire.

Jesus rode immediately to the temple; but it being evening, he soon left the city, to the great discouragement of the people, who expected he was immediately to have taken into his hands the reins of government.

At the earliest dawn he left Bethany, to visit again the capital of Judea. And as he pursued his journey, he saw at a distance a fig-tree, which, from its fullness of leaves, promised abundance of fruit. This inviting object induced him to approach it, in expectation of finding figs; for he was hungry, and the season for gathering them had not yet arrived; but on his coming to the tree, he found it to be really barren: upon which the blessed Jesus said to it, "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward, for ever." This action, which was purely emblematical, and prefigured the speedy ruin of the Jewish nation, on account of its unfruitfulness, under all the advantages it then enjoyed, has, by the enemies of revelation, been represented as an action unbecoming the Redeemer of mankind. But if they had fully considered its intention, they would have been clearly convinced, that, like the rest of his miracles, it was done with a gracious intention—namely, to awaken the Jews from their lethargy, and by timely repentance prevent the total ruin of their church and nation.

While in the temple, he continued to rebuke and exhort the people, and in foretelling his death was so affected, that he uttered in a very pathetic manner his grief, and addressed his heavenly Father for succor in his distress. "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour." This should teach us, that prayer is the only method of easing the mind overwhelmed with distress; but at the same time to be always resigned to the divine will: for though the weakness of human nature may shrink when persecution or sufferings of any kind appear, yet, by reflecting on the wisdom, goodness, and power of God to deliver us, we ought to support every trial, however severe, with patience, as he doubtless proposes some happy ends by these afflictions.

Our Lord, having made a short prayer to his Father,

begged him to demonstrate the truth of his mission, by some token which could not be resisted: "Father, glorify thy name." Nor had he hardly uttered these words, before he was answered by an audible voice from heaven: "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again."

Jesus, the infallible preacher of righteousness, having given many precepts, spoken many parables, and exposed the secret practices of the Scribes and Pharisees, repaired with his disciples into the court of the women, called the treasury, from several chests being fixed to the pillars of the portico surrounding the court, for receiving the offerings of those who came to worship in the temple. While he continued in the court, he "beheld how the people cast money into the treasury; and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily, I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast more in than all they which have cast into the treasury: for all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living."

Though the offering given by this poor widow was in itself very small, yet, in proportion to the goods of fortune she enjoyed, it was remarkably large; for it was all that she had, even all her living. In order, therefore, to encourage charity, and show that it is the disposition of the mind, not the magnificence of the offering, that attracted the regard of the Almighty, the Son of God applauded this poor widow, as having given more in proportion than any of the rich. And from this passage of the gospel we should learn that the poor, who in appearance are denied the means of doing charitable offices, are encouraged to do all they can; for how small soever the gift may be, the Almighty, who beholds the heart, values it, not according to what it is in itself, but according to the disposition with which it is given.

On the other hand, we should learn from hence that it is not enough for the rich that they exceed the poor in the gifts of charity; they should bestow in proportion to their income.

and they would do well to remember that a little given, where a little only is left, appears a much nobler offering in the sight of God, and discovers a more benevolent and humane temper of mind, than sums much larger, bestowed out of a plentiful abundance.

The disciples now remembered that their Master, at the conclusion of his pathetic lamentation over Jerusalem, had declared that the temple should not any more be favored with his presence, till they should say, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." A declaration of this kind could not fail of greatly surprising his disciples; and therefore, as he was departing from that sacred structure, they desired him to observe the beauty of the building, insinuating that they thought it strange he should intimate an intention of leaving it desolate; that so glorious a fabric, celebrated in every corner of the earth, was not to be deserted rashly! and that they should think themselves supremely happy when he, as the Messiah and descendant of David, should take possession of it, and erect his throne in the midst of Jerusalem.

The eastern wall of the temple, which fronted the Mount of Olives, whither the disciples, with their Master, were then retiring, was built from the bottom of the valley to a prodigious height, with stones of an incredible bulk, firmly compacted together, and therefore made a very grand appearance at a distance. The eastern wall is supposed to have been the only remains of Solomon's temple, and had escaped when the Chaldeans burnt it. But this building, however strong or costly it appeared, our Saviour told them should be totally destroyed. That noble edifice, raised with much labor and at vast expense, shall be razed to the very foundation. The disciples, therefore, when they heard their Master affirm that not so much as one of these enormous stones, which had withstood the fury of Nebuchadnezzar's army, and survived the destructive hand of time, was to be left one upon another, they perceived that the whole temple was to be demolished, but did not suspect that the sacrifices were to be taken away, and a new mode of religion introduced, which rendered the

temple unnecessary. They therefore flattered themselves that the fabric then standing, however glorious it might appear, was too small for the numerous worshipers who would frequent it when all the nations of the world were subject to the Messiah's kingdom, and was therefore to be pulled down, in order to be erected on a more magnificent plan, suitable to the idea they had conceived of his future empire. Filled with these pleasing imaginations, they received the news with pleasure, meditating, as they walked to the mountain, on the glorious things which were shortly to come to pass.

When their Master had taken his seat on some eminence of the sacred mountain, from whence they had a prospect of the temple and part of the city, his disciples drew near, to inquire when the demolition of the old structure was to happen, and what were to be the signs of his coming, and of the end of the world.

His disciples, by this request, seemed desirous of knowing what signs should precede the erection of that extensive kingdom over which they supposed the Messiah was to reign, in a secular view. They therefore connected the demolition of the temple with their Master's coming, though they had not the least notion that he was to destroy the nation, and change the form of religious worship. They therefore meant, by the "end of the world," or, as the words should have been translated, the end of the age, the period of the political government then executed by heathen procurators, and considered their Master's coming to destroy the constitution then subsisting, as a very desirable event.

Our blessed Saviour, therefore, was careful to convince them of their mistake, by telling them that he was not come to rule a secular empire, as they supposed, but to punish the Jews for their perfidy and rebellion, by destroying both their temple and nation.

The heavenly Prophet added many exhortations and warnings, bidding his disciples be watchful and prayerful—ready for his coming in a spiritual sense.

He spake many parables, after which he added an account

of his own death, in order to fortify his disciples against a greater trial than they had yet met with—namely, the sufferings of their Master.

When the evening approached, our blessed Saviour, with his disciples, repaired to Bethany, and entered the house of Simon the leper, probably one who had experienced the healing efficacy of his power. But while he sat at meat, a woman, who had also doubtless been an object of his mercy, poured a box of precious ointment upon his head.

The action displeased his disciples, who knew that their Master was not delighted with luxuries of any kind; and therefore they rebuked the woman, imagining that it would have been more acceptable to the Son of God, if the ointment had been sold, and the money distributed among the sons and daughters of poverty and affliction.

To reprove the disciples, Jesus told them that it pleased the Divine Providence to order that there should always be persons in necessitous circumstances, that the virtuous might never want occasions for exercising their charity; but that those who did not now testify their love to him, would never more have the opportunity of doing it, as the time of his ministry was near its period, when the king of terrors should enjoy a short triumph over his body; and therefore this woman had seasonably anointed him for his burial. And to make them sensible of their folly, in blaming the woman for this, her expression of love to him, he assured them that she should be highly esteemed for this action in every part of the world, and her memory live to the latest period of time.

Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, having been more forward than the rest in condemning the woman, thought the rebuke was particularly directed to him.

Stung with the guilt of his conscience, he rose from the table, went immediately into the city, to the high priest's palace, where he found the whole council assembled. His passion would not suffer him to reflect on the horrid deed he was going to commit; he immediately promised, for the reward of thirty shekels of silver, to betray into their hands his Lord and Master. Having thus engaged with the rulers

of Israel to put into their hands a person who had been long laboring for their salvation, who had often invited them, in the most pathetic manner, to embrace the benevolent terms of the gospel offered by the Almighty, he sought an opportunity to betray him, in the absence of the multitude!

Our Lord, who well knew that the time of his suffering drew nigh, desired therefore to celebrate the passover with his disciples. He was now going to finish the mighty work for which he came into the world, and therefore would not neglect to fulfill the smallest particular of the law of Moses. He therefore sent two of his disciples into the city, to prepare a lamb, and make it ready for eating the passover; telling them that they should meet a man bearing a pitcher of water, who should conduct them to his house, and show them a large upper room, furnished, where they were to make ready for him.

He was willing, in this last transaction, to convince his disciples that he knew every thing that should befall him; that his sufferings were all predetermined by the Almighty, and that they were all on his account submitted unto voluntarily.

CHAPTER X.

THE HUMBLE JESUS WASHES HIS DISCIPLES' FEET; FORETELLS HIS BETRAYER; INSTITUTES THE SACRAMENT; PRAYS WITH HIS DISCIPLES FOR THE LAST TIME; SUFFERINGS IN THE GARDEN.

HEN night approached, Jesus left Bethany, and every thing being ready for him at the time he entered into the city, he sat down at the appointed hour. But knowing that his suffering was now near, he told his disciples, in the most affectionate manner, that he had greatly longed to eat the passover with them before he suffered, in order to show them the strongest proofs of his love. These proofs were to give them a pattern of humility and charity, by washing their feet, instructing them in the nature of his

death, and a propitiatory sacrifice, instituting the sacrament in commemoration of his sufferings, comforting them by the tender discourses recorded, (John, 14th, 15th, 16th,) in which he gave them a variety of excellent directions, together with many gracious promises; and recommending them to the kind protection of his heavenly Father.

Having thus spoken, he arose from the table, laid aside his garment like a servant, and, with all the officiousness of an humble minister, washed the feet of his disciples without distinction, (though one of them, Judas Iscariot, was a monster of impiety,) that they might at once behold a conjunction of character and humility, of self-denial and indifference, represented by a person glorious beyond expression, their great Lord and Master. He washed their feet, (according to a custom which prevailed in those hot countries, both before and after meat,) in order to show them an example of the utmost humility and condescension.

The omnipotent Son of the Father lays every thing aside, that he may serve his followers: heaven stoops to earth, one abyss calls upon another, and the miseries of man, which were almost infinite, are exceeded by a mercy equal to the immensity of the Almighty. He deferred this ceremony, which was a customary civility paid to honorable strangers at the beginning of their feast, that it might be preparatory to the second, which he intended should be a feast to the whole world, when all the followers of the blessed Jesus should have an opportunity, in a spiritual manner, of feeding on his flesh, and drinking his blood. When he came to Peter, he modestly declined it; but his Master told him, if he refused to submit implicitly to all his orders, he could have no part with him. On which Peter cried out, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." But Jesus told him that the person who had bathed himself had no reason to wash any part of the body, except his feet, which might need cleansing by walking from the bath; and added, ye are all clean as to the outward laver, but not as to the spiritual and inward. I well know that one of you shall betray me.

When our gracious Lord had finished his menial service, he asked his disciples if they knew the meaning of what he had done, as the action was purely emblematical. You truly, added he, style me Master and Lord; for I am the Son of God and the Saviour of the world. But if I, your Master and your Lord, have condescended to wash your feet, you surely ought to perform, with the utmost pleasure, the humblest offices of love one to another. I have set you a pattern of humility, and I recommend it to you. And certainly nothing can more effectually show us the necessity of this heavenly temper of mind, than its being recommended to us by so great an example—a recommendation which, in the present circumstances, was particularly seasonable: for the disciples having heard their great Master declare that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, their minds were filled with ambitious thoughts. And therefore our blessed Saviour added, Ye need not be ashamed to follow my example in this particular; for no servant can think it beneath him to condescend to perform those actions his Lord has done for him. And therefore if he knows his duty, he will be happy if he practices it. He moreover added, that though he had called them all to the apostleship, and well knew the secret dispositions of every heart before he chose them, they need not be surprised that one among them should prove a traitor, as thereby the Scripture would be fulfilled: "He that eateth bread with me, hath lifted up his heel against me." As our Saviour was now to be but a short time with his disciples, he thought proper to take his farewell of them, which he did in a most affectionate manner.

These melancholy tidings greatly troubled them. They were unwilling to part with so kind a friend, so dear a Master, so wise a guide, and so profitable a teacher; especially as they thought they should be left in a forlorn condition, a poor and helpless prey to the rage and hatred of a blind and malicious generation. They seemed willing to die with their Lord, if that might be accepted. I will lay down my life for thee, was the language of one, and even of all of them; but they could not support the thoughts of a disconsolate

separation. Their great and compassionate Master, seeing them thus dejected, endeavored to cheer their drooping spirits. "Let not your hearts be troubled." Listen attentively to what I am going to deliver for your consolation. "I am going to prepare a place for you; I will come again, and receive you to myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." A reviving word of promise! They were one day to meet again their dear, their affectionate Master, in a place where they should live together to all eternity.

But death makes so vast a distance between friends, and the disciples then knew so little of a future state, that they seemed to doubt whether they should, after their parting, meet their dear Redeemer. They neither knew the place where he was going, nor the way that led to his kingdom. "Lord," said they, "as we know not whither thou goest, how can we know the way?" In answer to this question, he told them that he was "the way, the truth, and the life;" as if he had said, through the propitiatory sacrifice I am about to offer, the sacred truths I have delivered, and the divine assistance I shall hereafter dispense, you are to obtain that happiness which I go to prepare for you. But lest all these arguments should fail to quiet their minds, he had still another, which could not but be sufficient: "If ye love me," said he, "ye will rejoice, because I said I go to the Father;" intimating that he would consider it as a proof of love to him, if they ceased to mourn.

They doubtless thought that, by grieving for his death, they expressed their love to their Master; and it might seem strange that our Saviour should put such a contrary interpretation on their friendly sorrow, or require so unnatural a thing of them as to rejoice at his departure. What! (might they think,) shall we rejoice at so amiable a friend's removal from us? or can we be glad that he retires, and leaves us in this vale of misery? No, it is impossible; the human heart, on so melancholy an occasion, can have no disposition to rejoice.

The Saviour therefore adds this reason, to solve the seeming paradox: "because he was going to the Father;" that is,

he was going to ascend to the right hand of Infinite Power, from whence he would send them all the assistance they could desire. It must not, however, be supposed that he meant by these words that his disciples should not be concerned at his death, or that they could not love him unless they expressed a visible joy on this occasion. That indeed would have been a hard interpretation of their grief; he knew their grief flowed from love; and that if their love had not been strong, their sorrow had been much less. Indeed, their Master was fully convinced that love was the occasion of their sorrow; and therefore he used these arguments to mitigate it, and direct it in a proper course.

Nor did our Lord intend to intimate that all sorrow for so worthy a friend was unlawful, or an unbecoming expression of their love; doubtless he was not displeased to see his disciples so tenderly affected at his removal from them. He who shed tears at the grave of Lazarus, blended with sighs and groans, can not be thought to forbid them wholly at his own. He therefore did not chide his disciples with angry reproaches, as though they had been entirely in the wrong, but gently reasoned with them by kind persuasions. "Let not your hearts be troubled," as rather pitying than condemning their sorrow.

Soon after Jesus had spoken these things, his heart was greatly troubled, to think that one of his disciples should prove his enemy; he complained of it at the table, declaring that one of them should betray him.

This moving declaration greatly affected his disciples, and they began every one of them to say to their Master, "Lord, is it I?" But Jesus giving them no decisive answer, John, the beloved disciple, whose sweet disposition and other amiable qualities are perpetuated in the peculiar love his great Master bore him, and who was now reclining on his bosom, asked him who among the disciples could be guilty of so detestable a crime. Jesus told him that the person to whom he should give the sop, when he had dipped it, was he who should betray him. Accordingly, as soon as he had dipped the sop in the dish, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, saying to

him at the same time, "That thou doest, do quickly." Judas received the sop without knowing any thing of what his Master had told the beloved disciple; nor did any of the disciples, except St. John, entertain the least suspicion that Judas was the person who would betray their Master. The innocent disciples were indeed so deeply affected with this declaration that one of them should betray him, that they did not remark the words of Jesus to his apostate disciple, but continued to ask him who was the person that should be guilty of so base a crime.

Willing at last to satisfy their importunity, the blessed Jesus declared that the person who dipped his hand with him in the dish, should betray him. This to the eleven was a joyful declaration, but confounding in the highest degree to Judas. Impudent as he was, it struck him speechless, pointing him out plainly, and displaying the foulness of his heart.

While Judas continued mute with confusion, Jesus declared that his death should be brought about according to the decrees of Heaven, though that would not in the least mitigate the crime of the person who betrayed him; adding, "It had been good for that man, if he had not been born." Judas having now recovered himself a little, asserted his innocence by a question which implied a denial of the charge. But his Master soon silenced him, by positively affirming that he was really the person.

Ever mindful of the grand design of his mission, even the salvation of lost and perishing sinners, the great Redeemer was not in the least prevented by the treachery of his apostate disciple; for knowing that he must become a sacrifice for sin, he instituted the sacrament of his supper, to perpetuate the memory of it through all ages.

Accordingly, as they were eating the Paschal supper, "Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body." Observe this rite no longer in commemoration of your deliverance from Egypt, but in remembrance of me, who, by dying for you, will bring you out of the spiritual bondage—a bondage far worse than the Egyptian, under which your fathers

groaned, and will establish you in the glorious liberty of the children of God. Do it in remembrance of me, who, by laying down my life, will ransom you from sin, from death, from hell, and will set open the gates of heaven to you, that you may enter immortality in triumph.

Having given the bread to his disciples, he also took the cup, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins." All of you, and all of my disciples in all ages, must drink of this cup, because it represents my blood shed for the remission of the sins of mankind; my blood, by which the new covenant between God and man is ratified. It is therefore my blood of the new covenant; so that this institution exhibits to your joyful meditation the grand basis of the hopes of the children of men, and perpetuates the memory of it to the end of the world. He added, "I will not drink henceforth of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

Our blessed Saviour, after delivering the sacramental cup, and telling them that his blood was shed for them, mentioned the treachery of Judas a second time. "Behold, he is at hand that doth betray me." This second declaration was made very properly after the institution of the sacrament, which exhibits the highest instance of our great Redeemer's love to mankind; his dying to obtain remission of their sins; for it abundantly proves that the person who could deliberately be guilty of such an injury to so kind a friend, must have been a monster, the foulness of whose ingratitude can not be described by the force of language.

The important, the awful scene now approached, when the great work was to be finished. The traitor, Judas, was gone to the chief priests and elders for a band of soldiers to apprehend him; but this did not discompose the Redeemer; he took occasion to meditate on the glory that would accrue, both to himself and to the Almighty, from those sufferings, and spake of it to his disciples: "Now," said he, "is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him."

He told them that, having already done honor to his Father by the past actions of his life, and being about to honor him yet further by his sufferings and death, which would display his perfections, particularly his infinite love to the human race, in the most astonishing and amiable light, he was, in his turn, to receive honor from his Father; intimating that his human nature was to be exalted to the right hand of Omnipotence, and that his mission from God was to be supported by irrefragable attestations.

But his disciples, imagining that he spake of the glory of a temporal kingdom, their ambition was again revived, and they began to dispute, with as much keenness as ever, which of them should be greatest in that kingdom. This contention Jesus suppressed by the arguments he had formerly used for the same purpose. Among the Gentiles, said he, they are reckoned the greatest, who have the greatest power, and have exercised it in the most absolute manner; but your greatness shall be very different from theirs; it shall not consist in being unlimited with regard to tyrannical power, even though it should be joined with an affection of titles, which denote qualities truly honorable; but whosoever desires to be great, or chief among you, let him be so by his humility, and the service he renders to the rest, in imitation of me, your Master, whose greatness consists in this, that I am become the servant of you all. Adding, that as they had continued with him in this temptation, he would bestow upon them such a kingdom as his Father had appointed for him.

At the same time, to check their ambition, and lead them to form a just notion of his kingdom, he told them that he was soon to leave them, and that whither he was going they could not at that time follow him; for which reason, instead of contending with one another, which of them should be the greatest, they would do well to be united among themselves in the happy bond of love. For by loving one another sincerely and fervently, they would prove themselves his disciples, to the conviction of mankind, who could not be ignorant that love was a distinguishing part of his character.

This excellent doctrine, however, did not make such an impression on Peter as the words which Jesus had spoken concerning a place whither his disciples could not come.

He therefore replied by asking where he was going; to which Jesus answered, "Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterward." Further, in order to make his disciples humble, watchful, and kindly affectionate one toward another, he assured them that Satan was seeking to ruin them all by his temptations. "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he might sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."

Peter was greatly offended, that his Master should have singled him out as the weakest; for so he interpreted his praying for him particularly; and supposing that he mentioned Satan's seeking to sift him, as the thing that would prevent him from following his Master, replied, "Why can not I follow thee now? Is there any road more terrible than the dark valley of the shadow of death? Yet through these black and gloomy shades I am willing this moment to accompany thee." Jesus, knowing his weak, though sincere resolution, answered, "Art thou so very confident of thine own strength? I tell thee that this very night, before the cock crows, thou wilt thrice deny me to be thy Master."

Our blessed Saviour, having finished what he had to say to Peter in particular, turned himself to his other disciples, and put them in mind that, when they were first sent out, he directed them to rely wholly upon the Almighty for assistance. "When I sent you formerly," said he, "to preach the gospel, you may remember I ordered you to go without any provision, either for your sustenance or defense, assuring you, that though you would indeed meet with great opposition, yet Providence would dispose some men, in all places, to be your friends, and to furnish you with all necessaries; and accordingly you found that you wanted for nothing, but were wonderfully supported, without any care or provision of your own, in the whole journey, and finished your work

with success. But now the case is very different; the time of the greatest trial and distress, whereof I have often forewarned you, is just at hand; and you may now make all the provision in your power, and arm yourselves against it as much as you are able. I have finished the work for which I came into the world; and nothing now remains for me but to undergo those sufferings which the prophets have foretold concerning me, and to complete this whole dispensation of Providence, by submitting at last to a cruel and ignominious death."

The disciples, thinking their great Master meant that they should arm themselves in a literal sense, and endeavor to oppose the assaults that would shortly be made upon them by the Jews, answered, "Lord, here are two swords."

But the blessed Jesus, who only intended to convey an idea of their approaching distress and temptations, and to arm them against the surprise, replied, "It is enough." You need not trouble yourselves about any more weapons of this nature for your defense. "Be not terrified and disconsolate," added the compassionate Jesus, "because I have told you that I must undergo great sufferings, and be taken away from you for a time. You have always been taught to believe in God, who is the Almighty Preserver and Governor of all things; and to rely on him for deliverance in every affliction and distress. Learn now in like manner to believe in me, who have all power committed to me, as the preserver and head of my church; and trust in me to accomplish fully all things that I have promised you. If you do this, and persist steadfastly in the belief of my doctrine, and in obedience of my commands, nothing in this vale of misery, not even persecution or death itself, shall be able to hinder you from attaining the happiness I have proposed to you. For in heaven, my Father's house, there is abundant room to receive you; otherwise I would not have filled your minds with the hopes and expectation of happiness. But as there are mansions sufficient for you in another state, you may with confidence and assurance hope for the full accomplishment of my promises, notwithstanding all this present world may contrive

or act against you. And you also ought to bear patiently my departure from you at this time, since I only leave you to prepare a place, and open the portals of the eternal habitations where I shall be ever with you. When I have prepared a place for you in that eternal state, I will again return, and take you to myself. Nor shall you ever more be separated from me, but continue with me to all eternity, in full participation of my eternal glory and happiness, in the blissful regions of the heavenly Canaan. You must now surely know whither I am going, and the way that leads to these happy seats of immortality."

But the disciples, whose minds were not yet fully weaned from the expectation of a temporal power and glory, did not understand this discourse of their great and beloved Master. Accordingly Thomas replied, "Lord, we can not comprehend whither thou art going; and therefore must needs be ignorant of the way."

To which our blessed Jesus answered, "I myself, as I have often told you, am the true and only way to life; nor can any man go thither by any other way. If ye say ye do not know the Father, I tell you that no man who knoweth me, can be ignorant of my Father, of his will, and the manner of pleasing him: if ye know me, ye must know all my actions have been directed by the will of the Father, and for the glory of his name."

These and many other words of consolation having been spoken, they finished the passover with singing a hymn, and went out to the Mount of Olives.

On their arrival at the place which was to be the scene of his sufferings, he desired them to fortify themselves by prayer, and forewarned them of the terrible effect his sufferings would have upon them: they would make them all stumble that very night, agreeably to the prophecy of Zechariah: "I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad."

To strengthen their faith, therefore, he not only mentioned his resurrection, but told them they should see him in Galilee after he was risen from the dead.

On the Saviour's mentioning the offense that his disciples would take at his suffering, Peter recollected what had been said to him in particular before they left the house. Grieved, therefore, afresh, to find his Master entertain such thoughts of him, and being now armed with a sword, the vehemence of his temper urged him to boast a second time of his courageous and close attachment to his Master. "Though all men," said he, "should be offended because of thee, yet I will never be offended." But Jesus knowing that human confidence and security were weak and frail, thought proper to forewarn him of his danger again, and told him that the cock should not crow before he had denied him. Peter, however, still continued to repeat his confidence: "I will die with thee, but never deny thee." The disciples all joined with Peter in professing their fixed resolution of suffering death rather than they would deny their Master; but the event fully confirmed the prediction of our Saviour. From whence we may learn how ignorant men are of their own hearts, and that the strongest resolutions in their own strength avail nothing.

The compassionate Redeemer of mankind, not willing to lose one single moment of the short time of his ministry that yet remained, continued to instruct his disciples in the great truths he came into the world to explain; and from the vines which were growing round him on the Mount of Olives, he began his excellent discourse with the parable of the vine, to the following import: "Hitherto," said the blessed Jesus, "the Jewish church and nation have been the peculiar care of Providence; as a choice and goodly vine, likely to bring forth much fruit, is the special care of the husbandman. But from henceforth, my church, my disciples, and the professors of my religion, of what country or nation soever they be, shall become the people of God, and the peculiar care of Divine Providence. I will be to them as the root and stock of a vine, of which they are the branches, and my Father the husbandman, or vine-dresser."

With many similar words he continued his discourse, and having finished, he "lifted up his eyes to heaven, and prayed"

"... will."

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with great fervency that prayer recorded in the seventeenth chapter of John.

This pious and benevolent prayer being ended, Jesus and his disciples came down from the Mount of Olives into a field below, called Gethsemane, through which the brook Cedron ran, and in it, on the other side of the brook, was a garden, called the garden of Gethsemane. Here he desired his disciples to sit down, till he should retire to pray, taking with him Peter, James, and John, those three select disciples whom he had before chosen to be witnesses of his transfiguration, and now to be eye-witnesses of his passion, leaving the other disciples at the garden door, to watch the approach of Judas and his band. The sufferings he was on the point of undergoing were so great, that the very prospect of them excited this doleful exclamation, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; tarry ye here, and watch." On this great occasion he sustained those grievous sorrows in his soul, by which, as well as by dying on the cross, he became a sin-offering, and accomplished the redemption of mankind.

He now withdrew from them about a stone's cast, and his human nature being now overwhelmed beyond measure, he found it necessary to retire and pray that, if it were possible, or consistent with the salvation of the world, he might be delivered from the sufferings which were then lying on him. It was not the fear of dying on the cross which made him speak or pray in such a manner. To suppose this, would infinitely degrade his character. Make his sufferings as terrible as possible, clothe them with all the aggravating circumstances of distress, yet the blessed Jesus, whose human nature was strengthened by being connected with the divine, could not but shrink at the prospect of such sufferings as he had to endure.

He addressed his divine Father with a sigh of fervent wishes that the cup might, if possible, be removed from him; (in the Greek, it is, "O that thou wouldst remove this cup from me;") and having first kneeled and prayed, he fell prostrate on his face, accompanying his address with due expressions of resignation, adding immediately, "Not as I

will, but as thou wilt." Having prayed, he returned to his disciples, and finding them asleep, he said to Peter, "Simon, sleepest thou? Couldst thou not watch one hour?" Thou who didst so lately boast of thy courage and constancy in my service, canst thou so soon forget thy Master? But in this great distress he never lost sight of that kind concern he had for his disciples. "Watch ye," he says, "and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." Neither was he on these extraordinary occasions in the least chagrined with the offenses they had committed through frailty and human weakness; on the contrary, he was always willing to make excuses for them, alledging, in their defense, that the spirit truly was willing, but the flesh was weak.

It seems from these particulars that he spent some considerable time in his addresses; because his disciples fell asleep in his absence, and he himself retired again to pray; for the sorrows of our Lord continuing to increase upon him, affected him to such a degree that he retired a second time, and prayed to the same purpose, saying, "Oh, my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done." After which he returned again to them, and found them asleep; for their eyes were heavy.

He returned thus frequently to his disciples, that they, by reading his distress in his countenance and gesture, might be witnesses of his passion, which proves that his pains were beyond description intense and complicated; for he went away the third time to pray, and notwithstanding an angel was sent from heaven to comfort and strengthen him, yet they overwhelmed him, and threw him into an agony; upon which he still continued to pray more earnestly. But the sense of his sufferings still increasing, they strained his whole body to so violent a degree, that his blood, as it were, was pressed through the pores of his skin, which it pervaded, together with his sweat, and fell down in large drops to the ground. And he left them, and went away again.

Thus did he suffer unspeakable sorrows in his soul, as long as the divine wisdom thought proper. At length he obtained relief, being heard on account of his perfect and entire sub-

mission to the will of his heavenly Father. "And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow."

This circumstance shows how much the disciples were affected with their Master's sufferings.

The sensations of grief which they felt on seeing his unspeakable distress, so overpowered them that they sunk into a sleep. Our blessed Saviour for the last time came to his disciples, and seeing them still asleep, he said, "Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going; behold, he is at hand that doth betray me." The event will soon be over, which causes your sorrow; I am betrayed, and ready to be delivered unto death.

CHAPTER XI.

TAKEN BY A BAND OF SOLDIERS; HEALS THE WOUND OF MALCHUS; THE HIGH PRIEST; CONSIGNED TO THE BAR OF THE SANHEDRIM; CARRIED BEFORE THE ROMAN GOVERNOR; PILATE PUBLICLY ACQUITS HIM.

JUDAS, who had often resorted to the garden of Gethsemane with the disciples of our Lord, knowing the spot, and the usual time of his Master's repairing thither, informed the chief priests and elders that the proper time for apprehending Jesus was now come.

They therefore sent a band of soldiers with him, and servants carrying lanterns and torches to show them the way; because, though it was always full moon at the passover, the sky might be dark with clouds, and the place whither they were going was shaded with trees. At the same time, a deputation of their number accompanied the band, to see that every one did his duty. Judas having thus received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, they went thither with lanterns, and torches, and weapons, for

they were exceedingly anxious to secure and get him into their hands; and the soldiers having perhaps never seen Jesus before, found it necessary that Judas should distinguish him, and point him out to them by some particular sign. The treacherous Judas went before the band at a small distance, to prepare them for the readier execution of their office, by kissing his Master, which was the token agreed upon, that they might not mistake him, and seize upon the wrong person.

Stung with remorse at the horrid engagement into which he had entered, and not being now able to retreat from the execution of it, he determined to make use of art in his vile proceedings, and weakly imagined he could deceive him whom he was about to betray, on a supposition that when he should give the kiss, it might be considered by his Master as a singular mark of his affection. When, therefore, they approached near the spot, Judas, (who was at the head of the band,) suddenly ran forward, and coming up to Jesus, said, "Hail, Master! and kissed him. And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?" Before, however, Judas could make any reply, the band. (who had fixed their eyes on the person he had kissed,) arrived immediately, and surrounded Jesus.

The artifice and wicked designs of the base and perfidious Judas are here manifestly displayed. In order to conceal his villainy from his Master and his disciples, he walked hastily, and, without waiting for the band, went up directly and saluted him, wishing perhaps to have that considered as a token of apprising him of danger. But Jesus did not fail to convince him that he knew the meaning and intent of his salutation, saying, "Betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?"

Judas certainly concealed his treachery so well that Peter did not suspect him, as it is probable he would have struck at him rather than at Malchus, the high priest's servant.

The appointed time of our Lord's sufferings being now come, he did not, as formerly, avoid his enemies; but, on the contrary, on their telling him they sought Jesus of Nazareth,

he replied, "I am he;" thereby intimating to them that he was willing to put himself into their hands. At the same time, to show them that they could not apprehend him without his own consent, he in an extraordinary manner exerted his divine power; he made the whole band fall back, and threw them on the ground. But the soldiers and the Jews, imagining perhaps that they had been thrown down by some demon or evil spirit, with whom the Jews said he was in confederacy, advanced toward him a second time. "Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he," expressing again his willingness to fall into their hands. "If, therefore, ye seek me, let these go their way." If your business be with me alone, suffer my disciples to pass; for the party had surrounded them also. He seems to have made this request to the soldiers, that the saying might be fulfilled which he spake, "Of them which thou gavest me, I have lost none." For as he always proportioned the trials of his people to their strength, so here he took care that the disciples should escape the storm which none but himself could sustain.

At length, one of the soldiers, more daring than the rest, rudely caught Jesus, and bound him; upon which Peter drew his sword, and smote off the ear of the high priest's servant, who probably was showing greater forwardness than the rest in this business. The enraged disciple was on the point of singly attacking the whole band, when Jesus ordered him to sheathe the sword; telling him that his unreasonable and imprudent defense might prove the occasion of his destruction. He told him likewise that it implied both a distrust of God, who can always employ a variety of means for the safety of his people, and also his ignorance in the Scriptures. "Thinkest thou," said he, "that I can not now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" The word legion was a Roman military term, being a name which they gave to a body of five or six thousand men; wherefore, in regard that

the band which now surrounded them was a Roman cohort, our Lord might make use of this term by way of contrast, to show what an inconsiderable thing a cohort was, in comparison of the force he could summon to his assistance; more than twelve legions of *angels*, instead of soldiers. He yet was tenderly inclined to prevent any bad consequences which might have followed from Peter's rashness, by healing the servant, and adding, in his rebuke to him, a declaration of his willingness to suffer: "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"

The circumstance of his healing the ear of Malchus by touching it, evidently implies that no wound or distemper was incurable in the hand of Jesus; neither was any injury so great that he could not forgive.

It seems somewhat surprising that this evident miracle did not make an impression upon the chief priests, especially as our Lord put them in mind, at the same time, of his other miracles; for having first said, "Suffer ye thus far, he touched his ear, and healed him;" adding, "Be ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and staves?"

The priests had kept at a distance for some time, but drew near when they understood that Jesus was in their power; for they were proof against all conviction, being obstinately bent on putting him to death. And the disciples, when they saw their Master in the hands of his enemies, forsook him, and fled, according to his prediction; notwithstanding they might have followed him without any danger, as the priests had no design against them. "Then the band, and the captain and officers took Jesus, and bound him." But it was not the cord which held him; his infinite love was by far the strongest bond. He could have broken those weak ties, and exerted his divinity in a more wonderful manner: he could have stricken them all dead, with as much ease as he had before thrown them on the ground; but he patiently submitted to this, as to every other indignity which they chose to offer him, so meek was he under the greatest injuries.

Having thus secured him, they led him away, first to Annas, father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that

year. Annas having himself discharged the office of high priest, was consequently a person of distinguished character, which, together with his relation to the high priest, made him worthy of the respect they now paid him. But he refused singly to meddle in the affair; they therefore carried Jesus to Caiaphas himself, at whose palace the chief priests, elders, and scribes were assembled; having staid there all night, to see the issue of their stratagem.

This Caiaphas was he that advised the council to put Jesus to death, even admitting that he was innocent, for the safety of the whole Jewish nation. He seems to have enjoyed the sacerdotal dignity during the whole course of Pilate's government in Judea; for he was advanced by Valerius Gracchus, Pilate's predecessor, and was divested of it by Vitellius, governor of Syria, after he had deposed Pilate from his procuratorship.

An examination was commenced by the high priest asking Jesus of his disciples and his doctrine. He inquired of him what his disciples were; for what end he had gathered them; whether it was to make himself a king; and what the doctrine was which he taught them. In these questions there was a great deal of art; for as the crime laid to our Saviour's charge was that he had set up for the Messiah, and deluded the people, they expected he would claim that dignity in their presence, and so would, on his own confession, have condemned him without any further process.

This was unfair, as it was artful and ensnaring. To oblige a prisoner on his trial to confess what might take away his life, was a very inequitable method of proceeding, and Jesus expressed his opinion thereof with very good reason, and complained of it, bidding them prove what they had laid to his charge by witnesses. It was greatly to the honor of our blessed Redeemer, that all his actions were done in public, under the eye even of his enemies; because, had he been carrying on any imposture, the lovers of goodness and truth had thus abundant opportunities of detecting him with propriety; he therefore, in his defense, appealed to that part of his character, but his answer was construed to be disrespectful;

for, "when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so?" To which he meekly replied, with the greatest serenity, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?" Show me—prove before this court wherein my crime consists, or record it in the evidence on the face of my trial; which, if you can not, how can you answer for this inhuman treatment to a defenseless prisoner, standing on his trial before the world, and in open court? Thus Jesus became an example of his own precept: "And if a man smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the left also;" bearing the greatest injuries with a patience that could not be provoked. When the council found that Jesus declined answering the questions whereby they expected to have drawn from him an acknowledgment of his being the Messiah, they proceeded to examine many witnesses, to prove his having assumed that character; as they considered such a pretension as blasphemy in his mouth, who, being only a man, according to their opinion, could not, without the highest affront to the Divine Majesty, pretend to the title of the Son of God, as it belonged to the Messiah. But in this examination they acted like interested and enraged persecutors, rather than impartial judges, forming their questions in the most artful manner, in order, if possible, to draw expressions from him which they might pervert into suspicions of guilt, as some foundation for condemning Jesus, who had so long and faithfully labored for their salvation.

Their witnesses, however, disappointed them; some of them disagreeing in their story, and others mentioning things of no manner of importance. At last, two persons agreed in their depositions—namely, in hearing him say that he was able to destroy the temple of God, and to raise it in three days.

But this testimony was absolutely false; for he never said he could destroy and build the temple of Jerusalem in three days, as they affirmed.

It is true, after banishing the traders from the temple,

when the Jews desired to know by what authority he undertook to make such a reformation, he referred them to the miracle of his resurrection; bidding them "destroy this temple, (pointing probably to his body,) and in three days he would raise it up." The witnesses, therefore, either through malice or ignorance, perverted his answer into an affirmation that he was able to destroy and build the magnificent temple of Jerusalem in three days; and the judges considered this assertion as blasphemy, because it could only be done by the divine power.

Our Saviour made no reply to the evidence that was produced against him, which greatly provoked the high priest, who, supposing that he intended by his silence to put an affront on the council, rose from his seat, and with great perturbation demanded the reason for such remarkable conduct. "Answerest thou nothing?" said he; "behold, how many things they witness against thee." And several of the council added, "Art thou the Christ?" To which our blessed Saviour answered, If I should tell you plainly, ye would not believe me; and if I should demonstrate it to you by the most evident and undeniable arguments, ye would neither be convinced, nor let me go.

The high priest, finding all his attempts to trepan our Saviour in vain, said to him, I adjure you solemnly, by the dreadful and tremendous name of God, in whose presence you stand, that you tell us plainly and truly whether you are the Messiah, the Son of God.

The consequence attending his confession of the truth did not intimidate the blessed Jesus; for, being adjured by the chief magistrate, he immediately acknowledged the charge; adding, ye shall shortly see a convincing evidence of this truth, in that wonderful and unparalleled destruction which I will send upon the Jewish nation; in the quick and powerful progress which the gospel shall make upon the earth; and, finally, in my glorious appearance in the clouds of heaven at the last day, the sign you have so often demanded in confirmation of my mission.

Upon our blessed Saviour's making this answer, a number

of them cried out at once, "Art thou the Son of God?" To which he replied, "Ye say that I am;" a manner of speaking among the Jews, which expressed a plain and strong affirmation of the thing expressed.

When the high priest heard this second assertion, he rent his clothes with great indignation, and said unto the council, Why need we trouble ourselves to seek for any more witnesses? Ye yourselves—nay, this whole assembly, are witnesses that he hath spoken manifest and notorious blasphemy; what think ye? To which they all replied, that, for assuming the character of the Messiah, he deserved to be put to death.

Then began the servants and common people to fall upon him as a man already condemned; spitting upon him, buffeting him, and offering him all manner of rudeness and indignities. They blindfolded him, and some of the council, in order to ridicule him for having professed to be the great Prophet, bid him exercise his prophetical gift, in declaring who had smitten him. Such was the treatment of the Son of God, the Saviour of sinners, which, though derogatory to his character, he bore with patience and resignation, leaving his people an example to follow in his steps, and submit to the will of God in all things, without murmuring at any of the dispensations of his providence.

Being thus condemned by the unanimous voice of the grand assembly, it was resolved to carry the blessed Jesus before the governor, that he likewise might pass sentence upon him. The Roman governors of Judea generally resided at Cæsarea; but at the great feasts they came up to Jerusalem, to prevent or suppress tumults, and to administer justice, —it being a custom for the Roman governors of provinces to visit the principal towns under their jurisdiction, on this latter account. Pilate, being accordingly come to Jerusalem some time before the feast, had been informed of the great ferment among the rulers, and the true character of the person on whose account it was raised; for he entertained a just notion of it. "He knew that for envy they had delivered him."

He knew the cause of their envy, was impressed with a

favorable opinion of Jesus, and wished, if possible, to deliver him from his vile persecutors.

Early in the morning the Jewish council brought Jesus to the hall of judgment, or governor's palace. They themselves, however, went not into the hall, but stood without, lest they should be defiled, and rendered incapable of eating the passover, by some pollutions in the house of a heathen.

The same reason also hindered them from entering the governor's palace on other festivals, when that magistrate attended in order to administer justice; a kind of structure was therefore erected adjoining to the palace, which served instead of a tribunal or judgment-seat. This structure, called in the Hebrew, Gabbatha, was finely paved with small pieces of marble of different colors, being always exposed to the weather. One side of this structure joined to the palace, and a door was made in the wall, through which the governor passed to the tribunal. By this contrivance, the people might stand round the tribunal in the open air, hear and see the governor when he spoke to them from the pavement, and observe the whole administration of justice, without danger of being defiled either by him or any of his retinue.

Before this tribunal the great Redeemer of mankind was brought, and the priests and elders having taken their places round the pavement, the governor ascended the judgment-seat, and asked them what accusation they brought against the prisoner. Though nothing could be more natural than for the governor to ask this question, yet the Jews thought themselves highly affronted by it, and haughtily answered, If he had not been a great and very extraordinary malefactor, we should not have given you this trouble at all, much less at so unseasonable an hour. Pilate then examined Jesus, and finding he had not been guilty either of rebellion or sedition, but that he was accused of particulars relating to the religion and customs of the Jews, grew angry, and said, What are these things to me? Take him yourselves, and judge him according to your own law—plainly insinuating that, in his opinion, the crime they had laid to the prisoner's charge was not of a capital nature; and that such punish-

ments as they were permitted by Cæsar to inflict, were adequate to any misdemeanor that Jesus was charged with. But this proposal of the Roman governor was absolutely refused by the Jewish priests and elders, because it condemned the whole proceeding, and therefore they answered, We have no power to put any one to death, as this man certainly deserves, who has attempted not only to make innovations in our religion, but also to set himself up for a king.

The eagerness of the Jews to get Jesus condemned by the Roman governor, who often sentenced malefactors to be crucified, tended to fulfill the saying of the Redeemer, who during the course of his ministry had often mentioned what kind of death he was, by the counsel of his Father, appointed to die. Pilate, finding it impossible to prevent a tumult, unless he proceeded to try Jesus, ascended again the judgment-seat, and commanded his accusers to produce their accusations against him.

Accordingly they accused him of seditious practices, affirming that he had used every method in his power to dissuade the people from paying taxes to Cæsar, pretending that he himself was the Messiah, the great King of the Jews, so long expected. But they brought no proof of these assertions. They only insinuated that they had already convicted him of this assertion, which was absolutely false.

Pilate, however, asked him, Is it true, what these men lay to your charge, that you have indeed attempted to set up yourself as king of the Jews? To which Jesus replied, Have you ever, during your stay in this province, heard any thing of me that gave you reason to suspect me guilty of secret practices and seditious designs against the government? Or do you found your question only on the present clamor and tumult that is raised against me? If this be the case, be very careful lest you be imposed upon merely by the ambiguity of a word; for to be King of the Jews, is not to erect a temporal throne, in opposition to that of Cæsar, but a thing of very different nature; the kingdom of the Messiah is a heavenly kingdom. To which Pilate replied, Am I a Jew? Can I tell what your expectations are, and in what

sense you understand these words? The rulers and chiefs of your own people, who are the most proper judges of these particulars, have brought you before me, as a riotous and seditious person; if this be not the truth, let me know what is, and the crime thou hast been guilty of.

Jesus answered, I have indeed a kingdom, and this kingdom I have professed to establish. But then it is not of this world, nor have my endeavors to establish it any tendency to cause disturbances in the government; for, had that been the case, my servants would have fought for me, and not have suffered me to have fallen into the hands of the Jews. But I tell you plainly, my kingdom is wholly spiritual. I reign in the hearts of my people, and subdue their wills and affections into a conformity to the will of God.

You acknowledge, then, in general, answered Pilate, that you have professed to be a king? To which the blessed Jesus replied, In the sense I have told you, I have declared, and do now declare, myself to be a king. For this very end I was born, and for this purpose I came into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth; and whosoever sincerely loves, and is always ready to embrace the truth, will hear my testimony, and be convinced by it. Pilate answered, What is truth? And immediately went out to the Jews, and said unto them, I have again examined the man, but can find him guilty of no fault, which, according to the Roman law, is worthy of death.

This generous declaration, made by the governor, of the innocence of the blessed Saviour, had no effect on the superstitious and bigoted Jews. They even persisted in their accusations with more vehemence than before, affirming that he had attempted to raise a sedition in Galilee: "He stirreth up," said they, "the people, beginning from Galilee, to this place."

Jesus, however, made no answer at all to this heavy charge. Nay, he continued silent, notwithstanding the governor himself expressly required him to speak in his own defense.

A conduct so extraordinary, in such circumstances, astonished Pilate exceedingly; for he had great reason to be

persuaded of the innocence of Jesus. The truth is, he was altogether ignorant of the divine counsel by which the whole affair was directed.

There were many reasons which induced the blessed Jesus not to make a public defense. He came into the world purely to redeem lost and undone sinners by offering up himself a sacrifice for them; but had he pleaded with his usual force, the people had, in all probability, been induced to ask his release, and consequently his death had been prevented. Besides, the gross falsehood of the accusation, known to all the inhabitants of Galilee, rendered any reply absolutely needless.

In the mean time, the chief priests continued to accuse him, with great noise and tumult; and the meek and humble Jesus still continuing mute, Pilate spake again to him, saying, Wilt thou continue to make no defense? Dost thou not hear how vehemently these men accuse thee? But Pilate, recollecting what the chief priests had said with regard to a sedition in Galilee, asked if Jesus came out of that country; and on being informed he did, he immediately ordered him to be carried to Herod, who was also then at Jerusalem. The governor supposed that Herod, in whose dominions the sedition was said to have been raised, must be a much better judge of the affair than himself. Besides, his being a Jew rendered him more expert in the religion of his own country, and gave him greater influence over the chief priests and elders: he therefore considered him as the most proper person to prevail on the Jewish council to desist from their cruel prosecution. But if, contrary to all human probability, he should at their solicitation condemn Jesus, Pilate hoped to escape the guilt and infamy of putting an innocent person to death. He might also propose, by this action, to regain Herod's friendship, which he had formerly lost by encroaching, in all probability, on his privileges. But however that may be, or whatever motive induced Pilate to send Jesus to Herod, the latter greatly rejoiced at this opportunity of seeing him, hoping to have the pleasure of beholding him perform some miracle. In this, however, he was disap-

pointed; for as Herod had apostatized from the doctrine of John the Baptist, to which he was probably once a convert, and had even put his teacher to death, the blessed Jesus, however liberal of his miracles to the sons and daughters of affliction, would not work them to gratify the curiosity of a tyrant, nor even answer one of the many questions he proposed to him.

Herod finding his expectations thus cut off, ordered our blessed Saviour to be clothed with an old robe, resembling in color those worn by kings, and permitted his attendants to insult him. From Herod's dressing him in this manner, it evidently appears that the chief priests and elders had accused him of nothing but his having assumed the character of the Messiah, for the affront put upon him was plainly in derision of that profession.

The other head of accusation, namely, his having attempted to raise a sedition in Galilee, on account of tribute paid to Cæsar, they did not dare to mention, as Herod could not fail of knowing it to be a gross and malicious falsehood. And no crime worthy of death being laid to his charge, Herod sent him again to Pilate. It seems that, though he was displeased with the great Redeemer of mankind for refusing to work a miracle before him, yet he did not think proper to comply with the wishes of his enemies.

CHAPTER XII.

JESUS CONDEMNED AND DELIVERED AT THE INSTIGATION OF THE INVETERATE JEWS; IS LED TO MOUNT CALVARY; CRUCIFIED BETWEEN TWO THIEVES; NATURE'S PHENOMENON ON THE OCCASION.

IN order to acquire popular applause, the Roman governors used generally, at the feast of the passover, to release a prisoner nominated by the people. At this feast there was one in prison, named Barabbas, who, at the head of numbers of rebels, had made an insurrection in the city, and committed

murder during the confusion. The multitude being now again assembled before the governor's palace, began to call aloud on him to perform the annual office of mercy customary at that festival. Pilate, glad of this opportunity, told them that he was very willing to grant the favor they desired; and asked them whether they would have Barabbas or Jesus released unto them. But, without waiting for an answer, he offered to release Jesus, knowing that the chief priests had delivered him through envy; especially as Herod had not found him guilty of the crimes laid to his charge.

While these particulars were transacting, Pilate received a message from his wife, then with him at Jerusalem, and who had that morning been greatly affected by a dream which gave her great uneasiness.

The dream had so great an effect on this Roman lady, that she could not rest till she had sent an account of it to her husband, who was then sitting with the tribunal on the pavement, and begged him to have no hand in the death of the righteous person he was then judging.

The people had not yet determined whether they would have Jesus or Barabbas released to them; therefore, when Pilate received the message from his wife, he called the chief priests and rulers together, and in the hearing of the multitude, made a speech to them, in which he gave them an account of the examination which Jesus had undergone, both at his own and Herod's tribunal, declaring that in both courts it had turned out honorably to his character; for which reason he proposed to them that he should be the object of the people's favor. Pilate did the priests the honor of desiring to know their inclinations in particular, perhaps with a design to soften their stony hearts, and, if possible, to move them for once to an injured but innocent man. But he was persuaded that, if pity was absolutely banished from their callous breasts, his proposal would have been acceptable to the people, whom he expected would embrace the first opportunity of declaring in his favor. Yet in this he was disappointed. They cried out all at once "Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas."

Pilate himself was astonished at this determination of the multitude, and repeated his question, for he could hardly believe what he had himself heard. But on their again declaring that they desired Barabbas might be released, he asked them what he should do with Jesus, which is called Christ? As if he had said, You demand that Barabbas should be released; but what shall I then do with Jesus? You can not surely desire me to crucify him whom so many of you have acknowledged as your Messiah? "But they cried, saying, Crucify him! crucify him! Then Pilate saith unto them, Why? what evil hath he done? And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him?"

They were so resolutely determined to have him destroyed, that, notwithstanding the governor urged them again and again to desire his release, declared his innocence, and offered several times to dismiss him, they would not hear it, uttering their rage, sometimes in hollow, distant, inarticulate murmurs, and sometimes in furious outcries, to such a pitch were their passions raised by the craft and artful insinuations of their priests.

According, therefore, to the Jewish rites, Pilate made the most solemn and public declaration of the innocence of our dear Redeemer, and of his resolution of having no hand in his death. But, notwithstanding the solemnity of this declaration, the Jews continued inflexible, and cried out, with one voice, "His blood be on us, and on our children!" Dreadful imprecation! It shocks humanity! An imprecation which brought on them the dreadful vengeance of Omnipotence, and is still a heavy burden on that perfidious people!

The governor, finding it impossible to alter their choice, released unto them Barabbas. And as it was the general practice of the Romans to scourge those criminals they condemned to be crucified, Pilate ordered the blessed Jesus to be scourged before he delivered him to the soldiers to be put to death.

The soldiers having scourged Jesus, and received orders to crucify him, carried him into the Prætorium, or common hall, where they added the shame of disgrace to the bitterness of

his punishment; for, sore as he was by reason of his stripes they had given him, they dressed him in a purple robe, in derision of his being king of the Jews. Having dressed him in this robe of mock majesty, they put a reed in his hand, instead of a scepter, and after platting a wreath of thorns, they put it on his head for a crown, forcing it down in so rude a manner that his temples were torn, and his face besmeared with his most precious blood. To the Son of God in this condition, the rude soldiers bowed the knee, pretending to do it out of respect; but at the same time gave him severe blows on his head, which drove the points of the wreath afresh into his temples, and then spat on him, to express their highest contempt.

The governor, whose office obliged him to be present at this shocking scene of inhumanity, was ready to burst with grief. The sight of an innocent and virtuous man, treated with such revolting barbarity, raised in his breast the most painful sensation of pity; and though he had given sentence that it should be as the Jews desired, and had delivered the Saviour to the soldiers to be crucified, he was in hopes that, if he showed him to the people in that condition, they must relent, and earnestly petition him to be released. Filled with this thought, he resolved to carry him out, and exhibit to their view a spectacle capable of softening the most envenomed, obdurate, enraged enemy; and in order to render the impression still more poignant, he went out himself, and said unto them, Though I have sentenced this man to die, and have scourged him as one that is to be crucified, yet I once more bring him before you, that I may again testify how fully I am persuaded of his innocence, and that ye may yet have an opportunity of saving his life.

As soon as the governor had finished his speech, Jesus appeared on the pavement, his hair, his face, his shoulders clotted with blood, and the purple robe bedaubed with spittle of the soldiers. And that the sight of Jesus in this distress might make the greater impression on the minds of the people, Pilate, while he was coming forward, cried out, "Behold the man!" As if he had said, Will nothing make you relent?

Have ye lost all the feelings of humanity, and bowels of compassion? Can you bear to see the innocent, a son of Abraham, thus injured?

But all this was to no purpose. The priests, whose rage and malice had extinguished not only the sentiments of justice and feelings of pity natural to the human heart, but also that love which countrymen bear for each other, no sooner saw Jesus, than they began to fear the fickle populace might relent; and therefore, laying decency aside, they led the way for the multitude, crying out, with all their might, "Crucify him! crucify him!"

Pilate, vexed to see the Jewish rulers thus obstinately bent on the destruction of a person from whom they had nothing to fear that was dangerous, either with regard to their church or state, passionately told them that, if they would have him crucified, they must do it themselves; because he would not suffer his people to murder a man who was guilty of no crime. But this they also refused, thinking it dishonorable to receive permission to punish a person that had been more than once declared innocent by the judge. Besides, they considered with themselves that the governor might afterward have called it sedition, as the permission had been extorted from him.

Accordingly they told him that, even though none of the things alledged against the prisoner were true, he had committed such a crime in presence of the council itself, as by their law deserved the most ignominious death. He had spoken blasphemy, calling himself the Son of God, a title which no mortal could assume without the highest degree of guilt.

When Pilate heard that Jesus called himself the Son of God, his fear was increased. Knowing the obstinacy of the Jews, in all matters of religion, he was afraid they would make a tumult in earnest; or perhaps he was himself more afraid than ever to take away his life, because he suspected that it might be true. He doubtless remembered the miracles said to have been performed by Jesus, and therefore thought he might really be the Son of God.

Reflections of this kind induced Pilate to go again into the judgment-hall, and ask Jesus from what father he sprung, and from what country he came. But our blessed Saviour gave him no answer, lest the governor should reverse his sentence, and absolutely refuse to crucify him.

Pilate marveled greatly at this silence, and said unto him, Why dost thou refuse to answer me? You can not be ignorant that I am invested with absolute power, either to release or crucify you.

To which Jesus answered, I well know that you are Cæsar's servant, and accountable to him for your conduct. I forgive you any injury which, contrary to your inclinations, the popular fury constrains you to do unto me. Thou hast thy power from above, from the emperor; for which cause the Jewish high priest, who hath put me into thy hands, and by pretending that I am Cæsar's enemy, forces thee to condemn me; or, if thou refusest, will accuse thee as negligent of the emperor's interest; he is more guilty than thou.

This sweet and modest answer made such an impression on Pilate, that he went out to the people, and declared his intention of releasing Jesus, whether they gave their consent or not. Upon which the chief priests and rulers cried out, "If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend; whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Cæsar." This argument was weighty, and shook Pilate's resolution to the very basis. He was terrified at the thought of being accused to Tiberius, who in all affairs of government always suspected the worst, and punished the most minute crimes relative thereto with death. The governor being thus constrained to yield, contrary to his inclination, was very angry with the priests for stirring up the people to such a pitch of madness, and determined to affront them. He therefore brought Jesus out a second time, into the pavement, wearing the purple robe and crown of thorns; and, pointing to him, said, "Behold your king!" ridiculing the national expectation of a Messiah. This sarcastical expression stung them to the quick, and they cried out, "Away with him! away with him! crucify him!" To which Pilate answered, with

the same mocking air, "Shall I crucify your king?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Cæsar." Thus did they publicly renounce their hope of the Messiah, which the whole economy of their religion had been calculated to cherish. They also publicly acknowledged their subjection to the Romans; and consequently condemned themselves, when they afterward rebelled against the emperor.

The solemn, the awful period now approached, when the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world, was to undergo the oppressive burden of our sins upon the tree, and submit unto death, even the death of the cross, that we might live at the right hand of God for ever and ever.

Sentence being pronounced upon the blessed Jesus, the soldiers were ordered to prepare for his execution; a command which they readily obeyed, and after clothing him in his own garments, led him away to crucify him.

It is not said that they took the crown of thorns from his temples; probably he died wearing it, that the title placed over his head might be the better understood.

It is not to be expected that the ministers of Jewish malice remitted any of the circumstances of affliction, which were ever laid on persons condemned to be crucified. Accordingly Jesus was obliged to walk on foot to the place of execution, bearing his cross. But the fatigue of the preceding night, spent without sleep, the sufferings he had undergone in the garden, his having been hurried from place to place, and obliged to stand the whole time of his trial; the want of food and the loss of blood he had sustained, and not his want of courage on this occasion, made him faint under the burden of his cross.

The soldiers, seeing him unable to bear the weight, laid it on one Simon, a native of Cyrene, in Egypt, and forced him to bear it after the blessed Jesus.

The soldiers, however, did not do this out of compassion to the Saviour's sufferings, but to prevent his dying with the fatigue, and by that means elude his punishment.

In this journey to Calvary, he was followed by an innumerable multitude of people, particularly of women, who

lamented bitterly the severity of his sentence, and showed all the tokens of sincere compassion and grief. Jesus, who always felt the woes of others more than he did his own, forgetting his distress at the very time when it lay heaviest upon him, turned himself about, and, with a benevolence and tenderness truly divine, said to them, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children."

Being arrived at the place of execution, which was called Golgotha, or the place of skulls, from the criminals' bones which lay scattered there, some of our Redeemer's friends offered him a stupefying potion, to render him insensible to the ignominy and excruciating pain of his punishment.

But, as soon as he had tasted the potion, he refused to drink it, being determined to bear his sufferings, however sharp, not by intoxicating himself, but by the strength of patience, fortitude, and faith. Jesus having refused the potion, the soldiers began to execute their orders by stripping him quite naked, and in that condition began to fasten him to his cross. But while they were piercing his hands and his feet with nails, instead of crying out through the sharpness of the pain, he calmly, though fervently, prayed for them, and for all those who had any hand in his death; beseeching his heavenly Father to forgive them, and excusing them himself by the only circumstance that could alleviate their guilt, —I mean, their ignorance. "Father," said the compassionate Redeemer of mankind, "forgive them, for they know not what they do."

This was infinite meekness and goodness, truly worthy of the only-begotten Son of God; an example of forgiveness which, though it can never be equaled by any, should be imitated by all.

But behold the appointed soldiers dig the hole in which the cross was to be erected. The cross is placed in the ground, and the blessed Jesus lies on the bed of sorrows.

They nail him to it. His nerves break. His blood distills. He hangs upon his wounds naked, a spectacle to heaven and earth. Thus was the only-begotten Son of God,

who came down from heaven to save the world, crucified by his own creatures; and to render the ignominy still greater, placed between two thieves. "Hear, O heavens! O earth, earth, earth, hear! The Lord hath nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against him."

It was usual for the crimes committed by malefactors to be written on a white board with black, and placed over their heads on the cross. In conformity to this custom, Pilate wrote a title in the Hebrew, Greek and Latin languages, that all foreigners, as well as natives, might be able to read it, and fastened it to the cross, over the head of Jesus; and the inscription was, "This is the King of the Jews." But when the chief-priests and elders had read this title, they were greatly displeased; because, as it represented the crime for which Jesus was condemned, it insinuated that he had been acknowledged for the Messiah. Besides, being placed over the head of one who was dying by the most infamous punishment, it implied that all who attempted to deliver the Jews should perish in the same manner. The faith and hope of the nation, therefore, being thus publicly ridiculed, it is no wonder that the priests thought themselves highly affronted; and accordingly came to Pilate, begging that the writing might be altered. But as he had intended the affront in revenge for their forcing him to crucify Jesus contrary both to his judgment and inclination, he refused to grant their request.

When the soldiers had nailed the blessed Jesus to the cross, and erected it, they divided his garments among them; but his coat, or vesture, being without seam, woven from the top throughout, they agreed not to rend it, but to cast lots for it, by which the prediction of the prophet concerning the death and sufferings of the Messiah was fulfilled: "They parted my garments among them, and for my vesture did they cast lots,"—a sufficient indication that every circumstance of the death and passion of the blessed Jesus was long being determined in the court of heaven; and accordingly his being crucified between two malefactors was expressly foretold: "And he was numbered with the transgressors."

The common people, of the baser sort, whom the vile priests had incensed against Jesus, by the malicious falsehoods they had spread concerning him, and which they pretended to found on the depositions of witnesses—the common people, I say, seeing him hang in so infamous a manner upon the cross, and reading the inscription that was placed over his head, expressed their indignation at him by sarcastical expressions: "Ah thou," said they, "that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself, and come down from the cross."

But the common people were not the only persons who mocked and derided Jesus while he was suffering to obtain the remission of sins for all mankind. The rulers, who now imagined they had effectually destroyed his pretensions to the character of the Messiah, joined the populace in ridiculing him; and with a meanness of soul which many infamous wretches would have scorned, mocked him, even while he was struggling with the agonies of death. They scoffed at the miracles by which he demonstrated himself to be the Messiah, and promised to believe on him, on condition of his proving his pretensions by descending from his cross.

It is abundantly evident, that, if the blessed Jesus had descended from the cross, the Jewish priests would have continued in their infidelity; and consequently that their declaration was made with no other intention than to insult the Redeemer of mankind, thinking it impossible for him now to escape out of their hands.

The soldiers also joined in this general scene of mockery: "If thou be the king of the Jews," said they, "save thyself." Nor did even one of the thieves forbear mocking the great Lord of heaven and earth, though laboring himself under the most racking pains, and struggling with the agonies of death.

But the other exercised a most extraordinary faith, at a time when our great Redeemer was in the highest affliction, mocked by men, and hanged upon the cross, as the most ignominious of malefactors.

This Jewish criminal seems to have entertained a more

rational and exalted notion of the Messiah's kingdom than even the disciples themselves. They expected nothing but a secular empire; he gave strong intimations of his having an idea of Christ's spiritual dominion; for at the very time when Jesus was dying on the cross, he begged to be remembered by him when he came into his kingdom. Nor did he make this request in vain; the Saviour answered him, "Verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

But, see! the sun, that glorious luminary of heaven, as it were, hides his face from this detestable action of mortals, and is wrapped in the pitchy mantle of chaotic darkness! Surely nothing could be more proper than this extraordinary alteration in the face of nature, while the Sun of righteousness was withdrawing his beams, not only from the promised land, but from the whole world; for it was at once a miraculous testimony given by the Almighty himself to the innocence of his Son, and a proper emblem of the departure of him who was the light of the world; at least till his luminous rays, like the beams of the morning, shone out anew with additional splendor in the ministry of his apostles.

Nor was the darkness which now covered Judea and the neighboring countries, beginning about noon, and continuing till Jesus expired, the effect of an ordinary eclipse of the sun.

It is well known that this phenomena can only happen at the change of the moon; whereas the Jewish passover, at which time our dear Redeemer suffered, was always celebrated at the full.

Besides, the total darkness of an eclipse of the sun never exceeds twelve or fifteen minutes, whereas this continued three full hours.

Nothing, therefore, but the immediate hand of that Almighty Being which placed the sun in the centre of the planetary system, could have produced this astonishing darkness. Nothing but Omnipotence, who first lighted this glorious luminary of heaven, could have deprived it of its cheering rays.

It was considered as a miracle by the heathen themselves;

and one of them cried out, "Either the world is at an end, or the God of nature suffers!" And well might he use the expression; for never since this planetary system was called from its primitive chaos, was known such a deprivation of light in the glorious luminary of day.

When his mother, his mother's sister, Mary Magdalene, and the beloved disciple, observed the veil of darkness begin to extend over the face of nature, they drew near to the foot of the cross, probably in expectation that the Son of God was going to shake the frame of the universe, unloose himself from the cross, and take ample vengeance on his cruel and perfidious enemies.

The blessed Jesus was now in the midst of his sufferings. Yet when he saw his mother and her companions, their grief greatly affected his tender breast, especially the distress of his mother. The agonies of death under which he was now laboring could not prevent his expressing the most affectionate regard both for her and for them.

For, that she might have some consolation to support her under the greatness of her sorrows, he told her the disciple whom he loved, would, for the sake of that love, supply his place to her after he was taken from them, even the place of a son; and therefore he desired her to consider him as such, and expect from him all the duties of a child: "Woman," said he, "behold thy son!"

Nor was this remarkable token of filial affection toward his mother the only instance the dying Jesus gave of his sincere love to his friends and followers; the beloved disciple had also a token of his highest esteem. He singled him out as the only person among his friends to supply his place with regard to his mother.

Thus in the midst of the heaviest sufferings that human nature ever sustained, the blessed Jesus demonstrated a divine strength of benevolence.

Even at the time when his own distress was at the highest pitch, and nature was dressed in the robe of mourning for the sufferings of the Redeemer of mankind, his friends had so large a share of his concern, that their happiness inter-

rupted the sharpness of his pains, and for a short time engrossed his thoughts.

But now the moment when he should resign his soul into the hands of his heavenly Father approached, and he repeated part, at least, of the twenty-second Psalm, uttering with a loud voice, these remarkable words: "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabacthani?" that is "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Some of the people who stood by, when they heard him pronounce the first words of the psalm, misunderstood him; probably from their not hearing him distinctly, and concluded that he called for Elias.

Upon which one of them filled a sponge with vinegar, put it upon a reed, and gave him to drink; being desirous of keeping him alive as long as possible, and see whether Elias would come to take him down from the cross.

But as soon as Jesus had tasted the vinegar, he said, "It is finished;"—that is, the work of man's redemption is accomplished; that great work which the only-begotten son of God came into the world to perform is finished. In speaking these words he cried with an exceedingly loud voice, and afterward addressed his Almighty Father in words which form the best pattern of a recommendatory prayer at the hour of death: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

And having uttered these words, "he bowed his head and gave up the ghost."

But, behold! at the very instant that the blessed Jesus resigned his soul into the hands of his heavenly Father, the veil of the temple was miraculously rent from the top to the bottom, probably in the presence of the priest who burned incense in the holy place, and who doubtless published the account when he came out; for the Saviour expired at the ninth hour, the very time of offering the evening sacrifice.

Nor was this the only miracle that happened at the death of the great Messiah; the earth trembled from its very foundations, the flinty rocks burst asunder, and the sepulchres hewn in them were opened, and many bodies of saints, deposited there, awakened after his resurrection from the sleep

of death, left the gloomy chambers of the tomb, went into the city of Jerusalem, and appeared unto many. And as the rending of the veil of the temple intimated that the entrance into the holy place, the type of heaven, was now laid open to all nations; so the resurrection of a number of saints from the dead demonstrated that the power of death and the grave was broken; the sting was taken from death, and the victory wrested from the grave. In short, our dear Redeemer's conquests over the enemies of mankind were shown to be complete, and an earnest was given of the general resurrection from the dead.

Nor did the remarkable particulars which attended that awful period, when Jesus gave up the ghost, affect the natives of Judea only. The Roman centurion, who was placed near the cross to prevent disorders of any kind, glorified the Almighty, and cried out, "Truly this was the son of God." And others who were with them, when they beheld heaven itself bearing witness of the truth of our great Redeemer's mission, smote their breasts and retired.

They had been incessant with loud voices to have him crucified; but when they saw the face of creation wrapped in the gloomy mantle of darkness, during his crucifixion, and found his death accompanied with an earthquake, as if nature had been in an agony when he died, they rightly interpreted these prodigies to be so many testimonies from the Almighty of his innocence; and their passions, which had been inflamed and exasperated against him, became quite calm, or exerted in his behalf.

Thus was demonstrated, by many awful tokens, the truth, the divinity, the power of our Redeemer's mission; the blind, the obdurate Jews were struck with horror, fully convinced that the person they had cruelly put to death was nothing less than the son of God, the promised Messiah, the Saviour of the world.

CHAPTER XIII.

JESUS TREATED WITH INDIGNITY AFTER HIS CRUCIFIXION; WOMEN VISIT HIS SEPULCHRE; THE SAVIOUR BURSTS THE CHAINS OF DEATH, AND RISES FROM THE TOMB; APPEARS TO THE DISCIPLES; GIVES HIS BLESSING, AND ASCENDS TO HEAVEN.

IT was expressly forbidden by the law of Moses that the bodies of those who were hanged should remain all night upon the tree. In conformity to this law, and because the Sabbath was at hand, the Jews begged the governor that the legs of the three persons crucified might be broken, to hasten their death. To this request Pilate readily consented; and accordingly gave the necessary orders to the soldiers to put it in execution.

But on perceiving that Jesus was already dead, the soldiers did not give themselves the trouble of breaking his legs, as they had done those of the two malefactors that were crucified with him.

One of them, however, either out of wantonness or cruelty, thrust a spear into his side, and out of the wound flowed blood and water.

This wound, therefore, was of the greatest importance to mankind, as it abundantly demonstrated the truth of our Saviour's death, and consequently prevented all objections that the enemies of our holy faith would otherwise have raised against it.

The evangelist adds, that the legs of Jesus were not broken, but his side pierced, that two particular prophecies might be fulfilled: "A bone of him shall not be broken," and "They shall look on him whom they have pierced."

Among the disciples of our blessed Lord was one called Joseph of Arimathea, a person equally remarkable for his birth, fortune, and office. This man, who was not to be intimidated by the malice of his countrymen, went boldly to Pilate, and begged the body of his great Master.

He had, indeed, nothing to fear from the Roman governor who, during the whole course of our Saviour's trial, had shown the greatest inclination to release him; but he had reason to apprehend that this action might draw upon him the malice of the rulers of the Jews, who had taken such great pains to get the Messiah crucified.

However, the great regard he had for the remains of his Master made him despise the malice of the Jews, being persuaded that Omnipotence would defend him.

Pilate was at first surprised at the request of Joseph, thinking it highly improbable he was dead in so short a time. He therefore called the centurion, to know the truth of what Joseph had told him; and being convinced, from the answer of that officer, that it was even so, he readily gave up the body.

The worthy counselor having obtained his request, repaired to Mount Calvary, and, being assisted by Nicodemus, took the body down from the cross.

The latter was formerly so cautious in visiting Jesus, that he came to him by night; but in paying the last duties to his Master he used no art to conceal his design. He showed a courage far superior to that of any of the apostles, not only assisting Joseph in taking the body down from the cross, but bringing with him a quantity of spices necessary in the burial of his Saviour. Accordingly, they wrapped the body, with the spices, in fine linen, and laid it in a new sepulchre, which Joseph had hewn out of a rock for himself.

This sepulchre was situated in a garden near Mount Calvary, and in which having carefully deposited the body of Jesus, they fastened the door by rolling to it a very large stone.

Oh! what a wonderful spectacle was now exhibited in this memorable sepulchre! He who clothes himself with light, as with a garment, and walks upon the wings of the wind, was pleased to wear the habiliments of mortality, and dwell among the prostrate dead!

Who can repeat the wondrous truth too often? Who can dwell upon the enchanting theme too long? He who sits

enthroned in glory, and diffuses bliss among all the heavenly host, was once a pale and bloody corpse, and pressed the floor of this little sepulchre.

The women of Galilee, who had watched their dear Redeemer in his last moments, and accompanied his body to the sepulchre, observing that the funeral rites were performed in a hurry, agreed among themselves, as soon as the Sabbath was passed, to return to the sepulchre, and embalm the dead body of their Saviour, by anointing and swathing him in the manner then common among the Jews.

Accordingly they repaired to the city, and purchased the spices necessary for that purpose,—Nicodemus having furnished only a mixture of myrrh and aloes.

During these transactions, the chief priests and Pharisees, remembering that Jesus had more than once predicted his own resurrection, came to the governor, and informed him of it, begging at the same time that a guard might be placed at the sepulchre, lest his disciples should carry away the body. and affirm that he was risen from the dead.

This happened a little before it was dark in the evening, called "the next day that followed," by the evangelist, because the Jewish day began at sunset.

This request being considered reasonable by Pilate, he gave them leave to take as many soldiers as they pleased out of the cohort, which at the feast came from the castle of Antonia, and kept guard in the porticoes of the temple; for that they were not Jewish, but Roman soldiers, whom the priests employed to watch the sepulchre, is evident from their asking them of the governor.

The priests having thus obtained a guard of Roman soldiers, men long accustomed to military duties, and therefore the most proper for watching the body, set out with them to the sepulchre; and to prevent these guards from combining with the disciples in carrying on any fraud, placed them at their post, and sealed the stone which was rolled to the door of the sepulchre.

Thus, what was designed to expose the mission and doctrine of Jesus as rank falsehood and vile imposture, proved

in fact the strongest confirmation of the truth and divinity of the same, that could possibly be given; and placed what they wanted to refute, which was his resurrection from the dead, even beyond a doubt.

Very early in the morning after the Sabbath, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to visit the sepulchre, in order to embalm the Lord's body; but before they reached the place, there was a great earthquake, preceding the most memorable event that ever happened among the children of men, —the resurrection of the Son of God from the dead. "For the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it." Upon this the alarmed soldiers fled into the city, and the Saviour of the world rose from the dead.

The angel, who had till then sat upon the stone, quitted his station, and entered into the sepulchre.

In the mean time, the women proceeded on their way, consulting among themselves with regard to the method of putting their design of embalming the body of their Master into execution, particularly with respect to the enormous stone which they had seen placed there two days before, with the utmost difficulty.

But in the midst of this deliberation about removing this great and sole obstacle to their design, they lifted up their eyes, and perceived that it was already rolled away. Alarmed at so extraordinary and unexpected a circumstance, Mary Magdalene concluded that the stone could not have been rolled away without some design, and that those who rolled it away could have no other intent than that of removing the Lord's body.

Imagining, by appearance, that they had really done so, she ran immediately to acquaint Peter and John with what she had seen, and what she suspected, leaving Mary and Salome there, that if the other women should arrive during her absence, they might acquaint them with their surprise at finding the stone removed, and of Mary Magdalene's running to inform the apostles of it.

In the mean time, the soldiers, who were terrified at seeing

an awful messenger from on high roll away the stone from the door of the sepulchre, and open it in quality of a servant, fled into the city, and informed the Jewish rulers of these miraculous appearances.

This account was highly mortifying to the chief priests, as it was a proof of our Saviour's resurrection that could not be denied; they therefore resolved to stifle it immediately, and accordingly bribed the soldiers to conceal the real fact, and to publish every where that his disciples had stolen the body away by night.

While Mary was going to the disciples, those of her companions whom she had left continued advancing toward the sepulchre, and at their arrival, found what they expected—the body of their beloved Master gone; but at the same time beheld, to their great astonishment, a beautiful young man in shining raiment, very glorious to behold, sitting on the right side of the sepulchre.

Notwithstanding his beauty and benign appearance, they were greatly affrighted, and on the point of turning back, when the heavenly messenger, to banish their fears, told them, in a gentle accent, that he knew their errand. "Fear not," said he, "for I know ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here; for he is risen, as he said;" and then invited them to come down, and view the place where the Son of God had lain.

The women, greatly encouraged by the agreeable news, as well as by the peculiar accent with which this blessed messenger from the heavenly Canaan delivered his speech, went down into the sepulchre, when, behold, another of the angelic choir appeared! who gently reproved them for seeking the living among the dead.

When the women had satisfied their minds by looking at the place where the Lord had lain, the angel who first appeared to them resumed the discourse, and bade them go and tell his disciples, particularly Peter, the glad tidings of his Master's resurrection from the dead; that he was going before them to Galilee, and that they should there have the pleasure of seeing him.

The women, highly elated with the news of their Lord's resurrection, left the sepulchre, and ran to carry the disciples the joyful news.

Mary, however, returned to the sepulchre, to weep, and while there, the Saviour's well-known voice greeted her ear, on which she immediately knew him, and, falling down before him, would have embraced his knees, according to that modesty and reverence with which the women of the East saluted the men, especially those who were their superiors in station.

But Jesus refused this compliment, telling her that he was not immediately to ascend to heaven.

He was often to show himself to the disciples before he ascended, so that she would have frequent opportunities of testifying her regard for him, and at the same time, said to her,

"Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend to my Father and your father, and to my God and your God."

Thus did the blessed Jesus contemplate with a singular pleasure the work of redemption he had just finished.

The happy relation between God and man, which had long been canceled by sin, was now renewed.

The Almighty, who had disowned them on account of their disobedience, was again reconciled to them; he was to become their God and Father; they were exalted to the honorable relation of Christ's brethren and the sons of God; and their Father loved them with an affection far exceeding that of the most tender-hearted parent upon earth.

The kindness of the message sent by our Redeemer to his disciples will appear above all praise, if we remember their late behavior.

They had every one of them forsaken him in the greatest extremity; when he was scourged and mocked by the Roman soldiers, derided by his countrymen, and spitefully entreated by all, they hid themselves in some place of safety, and preferred their own security to the deliverance of their master. When he fainted under the burden of his cross, none of them were there to assist him.

But, notwithstanding they had refused to assist their master during his sufferings for the sins of the world, he graciously, he freely forgave them; he assured them of pardon, and called them by the endearing name of brethren.

The disciples, having a great desire to reach the sepulchre, soon left the women behind, and just as they arrived, Mary Magdalene, having seen the Lord, was coming away. But they did not meet her, because they entered the garden at one door while she was coming out of another.

When they came to the sepulchre, they saw the angels, and received from them the news of their blessed Master's resurrection. Highly elated with what they saw, they departed, and ran back to the city with such expedition, that they gave an account of what they had seen in the hearing of the disciples before Mary Magdalene arrived.

Nor will their speed appear at all incredible, if we consider that the nature of the tidings the apostles had to carry gave them wings, as it were, to make their brethren partakers of their joy at this surprising transaction.

In the meantime, the company of women, who followed the disciples, happened to meet Peter and John. But they had not gone far from the sepulchre, before Jesus himself met them, and said, "All hail!" On which they approached their great Lord and master, "held him by the feet, and worshiped him."

This favor of embracing his knees Jesus had previously refused to Mary Magdalene, because it was not then necessary; but he granted it to the women, because the angel's words having strongly impressed their minds with the notion of his resurrection, they might have taken his appearing for an illusion of their own imagination, had he not permitted them to touch him, and convince themselves, by the united reports of their senses, that he was their Lord, indeed, who was risen from the dead, after having suffered on the cross for the sins of mankind.

Soon after the women's first return to the disciples with the news that they had seen the appearance of angels, who told them that Jesus was risen from the dead, two of the

brethren departed on their journey to a village called Emmaus, about two miles distant from Jerusalem.

The concern they were in on account of the death of their beloved Master, was sufficiently visible in their countenances; and as they pursued their journey, talking with one another, and debating about the things that had lately happened among them, concerning the life and doctrine, the sufferings and death of the holy Jesus, and of the report that was just spread among his disciples of his being that very morning risen from the dead, Jesus himself overtook them, and joined company with them.

As he appeared like a stranger, they did not in the least suspect that their fellow-traveler was no other than the great Redeemer of the sons of men. He soon entered into discourse with them, by inquiring what event had so closely engaged them in conversation, and why they appeared so sorrowful and dejected, as if they had met with some heavy disappointment.

One of them, whose name was Cleophas, being surprised at the question expressed himself accordingly, and in answer to an interrogatory of Jesus, minutely related the circumstances of the Saviour's death, and their feelings in connection with it.

Jesus rebuked their want of faith, and commencing at the writings of Moses, he unfolded the Scriptures with such readiness and convincing clearness of argument as greatly astonished them.

When, therefore, they came to the village whither they were going, and Jesus seemed as if he would have passed on and traveled further, they, desirous of his company, pressed him in the strongest manner to tarry with them that night, as it was then late.

To this request he consented; and when they were sat down to supper, he took bread and gave thanks to God, and brake it, and gave it to them, in the same manner he used to do while he conversed with them upon earth before his death. This engaged their attention, and, looking steadfastly on him, they perceived it was their beloved master. But

they had then no time to express their joy and astonishment to their benevolent Redeemer, for he immediately vanished out of their sight.

This surprising event would not admit them to stay any longer in Emmaus. They returned that very night to Jerusalem, and found the apostles, with several other disciples, discoursing about the resurrection of Jesus; and, on their entering the room, the disciples accosted them, saying, "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared unto Simon."

While the two from Emmaus were describing the manner of Jesus appearing unto them, and offering arguments to convince those who doubted the truth of it, their great Master himself put an end to the debates by standing in the midst of them, and saying, "Peace be unto you."

This appearance of our blessed Saviour greatly terrified the disciples, who supposed they had seen a spirit; but to dispel their fears and doubts, Jesus came forward, and spoke to them in the most endearing manner, showed them his hands and his feet, and desired them to handle him, in order to convince themselves, by the united powers of their different senses, that it was he himself, and no spectre or apparition.

These infallible proofs sufficiently convinced the disciples of the truth of their Lord's resurrection, and they received him with rapture and exultation.

Jesus afterward appeared frequently unto them, and gave them full satisfaction, and instructed them in many things relating to their preaching the gospel, establishing the church, and spreading it through the whole earth.

A few days before the feast of Pentecost, or feast of weeks, the disciples went up to Jerusalem, where the blessed Jesus made his last appearance to them. Here he put them in mind of all those things written in the law, the prophets and psalms, concerning him, which were to be exactly accomplished. At the same time, "he opened their understandings by divine illumination;" he removed their prejudices by the operation of his spirit, cleared their doubts, improved their memories, strengthened their judgments, and enabled them to discern the true meaning of the Scriptures.

He next delivered unto them their commission to preach the doctrine of repentance and remission of sins in his name among all nations, and to enable them to perform the important work, promised to bestow on them the gift of the Holy Spirit, which he called the promise of his Father, because the Almighty had promised them by his prophets.

Having thus strengthened them for the important work they were going to undertake, he led them on to the Mount of Olives, as far as Bethany; where, standing on a hill above the town, he told them that he was going to ascend to his Father; for which reason they might go courageously through all the world, and preach the gospel to every rational creature. When the blessed Jesus had thus spoken, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. And in the action of blessing them, he was parted from them in the midst of the day, a shining cloud received him out of their sight—that is, this brilliant cloud encompassed him about, and carried him up to heaven, not suddenly, but at leisure, that they might behold him departing, and see the proof of his ascending into heaven, as he had promised them.

The cloud in which the Saviour ascended was more bright and pure than the clearest lambent flame, being, as is supposed, no other than the Shechinah, or glory of the Lord! the visible symbol of the Divine presence which had so often appeared to the patriarchs of old; which filled the temple at its dedication, and which, in its greatest splendor, can not be looked upon with mortal eyes; for which reason it is called the light inaccessible. As he ascended, the flaming cloud that surrounded him, marked his passage through the air, but gradually lost its magnitude in the eyes of those who stood below, till at last it vanished, together with their beloved Master, out of their sight.

In this illustrious manner did the great Redeemer of mankind, after having finished the grand work which he left the bosom of his Father to execute; which angels with joy descried was to happen, and which, through eternity to come, shall, at periods the most intensely distant from the time of its execution, be looked back upon with inexpressible delight

by every inhabitant of heaven; for though the minute affairs of time may vanish altogether and be lost, when they are removed far back by the endless progression of duration, this object is one that no distance, however great, can lessen.

The kingdom of heaven is erected on the incarnation and sufferings of the Son of God, the kingdom and city of the Almighty comprehending all the people of God in the universe, made happy by goodness and love, and, therefore, none of them can ever forget the foundation on which their happiness stands established. The human beings in particular, recovered by the labor of Christ, will view their deliverer, and look back on his stupendous undertaking with the highest rapture, while they are feasting without interruption on its delicious fruits.

The angels likewise, the celestial inhabitants of the city of God, will contemplate it with perpetual pleasure, as the happy means of recovering their kindred that were lost; and possibly the grand confirmation of the whole rational system, in their subjection to him who reigneth forever, and whose favor is better than life itself.

Thus have we followed our dear Redeemer through all the transactions of his life, and enlarged on the stupendous miracle of his resurrection, on which glorious event the whole christian doctrine is founded.

As the similarity between Christ and the law-giver, Moses, (whom the Divine Redeemer mentioned to his disciples but a short time before his ascension into heaven,) is so very remarkable, we shall, as an illustration of the glorious subject, point out a few instances, which will evince that the prophecies of old were only to be completed in the sufferings and death of Christ.

Moses was the most distinguished of all the prophets, and his greatest prophecy was, that of another prophet, to be raised like unto himself. He was, at the time of his prediction, about to leave his people, and therefore, to give them some comfort, he promised them another prophet. "The Lord thy God," said he, "will raise unto thee a prophet, from

the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him shall ye hearken."

That this person, of whom Moses prophesied, was the great Redeemer, is amply evident; and that Moses resembled Christ in a much greater degree than any other person ever did, will appear from the following circumstances:

Both Moses and Christ showed signs and wonders, and in these respects none of the ancient prophets were like unto Moses. None of them were law-givers; they only interpreted and enforced the laws of Moses. None of them had such clear communication with God; they all saw visions, and dreamed dreams. Moses and Christ are the only two who perfectly resembled each other in these respects.

Moses fled from his country, to escape the hands of the king of Egypt; so did Christ, when his parents went into Egypt. Afterward, "the Lord said unto Moses in Midian, Go, return into Egypt, for all men are dead which sought thy life;" so the angel of the Lord said unto Joseph, in nearly the same words, "Arise, and take the young child, and go into the land of Israel; for they are dead which sought the young child's life;" pointing him out, as it were, for that prophet who should arise, like unto Moses.

Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction: Christ refused to be made king, choosing rather to suffer the like.

Moses, says St. Stephen, was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians; and Josephus says that he was a very forward and accomplished youth, and had wisdom and knowledge beyond his years.

St. Luke observes of Christ, that he increased betimes in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man; and his discourses in the temple with the doctors, when he was but twelve years old, were a proof of it.

Moses was not only a law-giver, a prophet, and a worker of miracles, but a king and priest; in all these offices the resemblance between Moses and Christ was singular.

Moses brought darkness over the land; the sun withdrew his light at Christ's crucifixion; and as the darkness which

spread over Egypt was followed by the destruction of their first-born, and of Pharaoh and his host, so the darkness at Christ's death was the forerunner of the destruction of the Jews.

Moses foretold the calamities which would befall the nation for their disobedience; so did Christ.

The spirit which was in Moses was conferred in some degree upon the seventy elders, and they prophesied; Christ conferred miraculous powers on his seventy disciples.

Moses was victorious over powerful kings and great nations; so was Christ, by the effects of his religion, and by the fall of those who persecuted the church.

Moses conquered Amalek by holding up both his hands; Christ overcame his and our enemies, when his hands were fastened to the cross.

Moses interceded for transgressors, and caused an atonement to be made for them, and stopped the wrath of God; so did Christ.

Moses ratified a covenant between God and the people, by sprinkling them with blood; Christ with his own blood.

Moses desired to die for the people, and prayed that God would forgive them, or blot him out of his book; Christ did more, he died for sinners.

Moses instituted the Passover, when a lamb was sacrificed, none of whose bones were to be broken, and whose blood protected the people from destruction; Christ was the Paschal Lamb.

Moses lifted up the serpent, that they who looked upon him might be healed of their mortal wounds; by properly looking up to Christ, all will be healed.

All the affection of Moses toward the people, all his cares and toils on their account, were repaid by them with ingratitude, murmuring, and rebellion; the same returns the Jews made to Christ for all his benefits.

Moses was ill used by his own family; his brother and sister rebelled against him: there was a time when Christ's own brethren believed not in him, and his disciples forsook him.

Moses had a very wicked and perverse generation committed to his care and conduct; and, to enable him to rule them, miraculous powers were given to him, and he used his utmost endeavors to make the people obedient to God, and to save them from ruin, but in vain; in the space of forty-two years they all fell in the wilderness, except two: Christ was also given to a generation not less wicked and perverse; his instructions and his miracles were lost upon most of them, and in about the same space of time after they rejected him, they were destroyed.

Moses was very meek, above all the men that were upon the face of the earth; so was Christ.

The people could not enter into the land of promise till Moses was dead; by the death of Christ the kingdom of heaven was open to all believers.

Moses enlightened the Jews under the dispensation of the old law; Christ enlightened the Christians under the gospel.

Moses did great wonders in the land of Egypt; Christ did great miracles in Judea.

In the deaths of Moses and Christ there is also a resemblance in some circumstances: Moses died, in some sense, for the iniquities of the people; it was their rebellion which was the occasion of it, which drew down the displeasure of God upon them and upon him; Moses went up, in the sight of the people, to the top of Mount Nebo, and there he died, when he was in perfect vigor, when his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated: Christ suffered for the sins of men, and was led up, in the presence of the people, to Mount Calvary, where he died in the flower of his age, and when he was in his full natural strength.

Moses died, in some sense, for the iniquities of the people; Christ suffered for the sins of men.

Neither Moses nor Christ, as far as we can collect from sacred history, were ever sick, or felt any bodily decay or infirmity, which would have rendered them unfit for the toils they underwent; their sufferings were of another kind.

Lastly, as Moses, a little before his death, promised another *Prophet;* so Christ, before his death, promised *another Comforter.*

Moses, says St. Ambrose, was the figure of that preceptor that was to come; who should preach the gospel, fulfill the Old Testament, build the New, and feed the people with celestial aliment.

Such are the comparisons relative to the great resemblance between Moses and Christ; but the greatest similitude consists in their both being lawgivers, which no other prophet ever was.

They may resemble each other in many other circumstances, and a fruitful imagination may strike upon further resemblances; but what we have mentioned may suffice. And we may ask, Is this similitude between Moses and Christ the effect of mere chance? Let us search all the records of universal history, and see if we can find a man who was so like to Christ as Moses was.

If we can not find such a one, then have we "found him of whom Moses, in the law and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God."

We shall conclude this history with a few observations on the general conduct of our blessed Redeemer, during his abode with men on earth.

The human character of the Saviour, as it results from the accounts given of him by the evangelists—for they have not formally drawn it up—is entirely different from that of all other men whatsoever; for whereas they have selfish passions deeply rooted in their breasts, and are influenced by them in almost every thing they do, Jesus was so entirely free from them, that the most severe scrutiny can not furnish one single action in the whole course of his life wherein he consulted his own interest only. No; he was influenced by very different motives; the present happiness and eternal welfare of sinners regulated his conduct; and while others followed their respective occupations, Jesus had no other business than that of doing the will of his Father, and promoting the happiness of the sons of men. Nor did he wait till he was solicited to extend his benevolent hand to the distressed.

He went about doing good, and always accounted it more

blessed to give than to receive; resembling God rather than man.

It is common for persons of the most exalted faculties to be elated with success and applause, or dejected by censure and disappointments; but Jesus, was never elated by the one, nor depressed by the other.

He was never more courageous than when he met with the greatest opposition and cruel treatment; nor more humble than when the sons of men worshipped at his feet. He came into the world inspired with the grandest purpose that ever was formed, that of saving from eternal perdition, not a single nation, but the whole world; and in the execution of it went through the longest and heaviest train of labors that ever was sustained, with a constancy and resolution on which no disadvantageous impression could be made by any accident whatever.

Calumny, threatenings, bad success, with many other evils constantly attending him, served only to quicken his endeavors in this glorious enterprise, which he unceasingly pursued, even till he finished it by his death.

The generality of mankind are prone to retaliate injuries received, and all seem to take a satisfaction in complaining of the cruelties of those who oppress them; whereas the whole of Christ's labors breathed nothing but meekness, patience, and forgiveness,—even to his bitterest enemies, and in the midst of the most excruciating torments. The words "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do," uttered by him when his enemies were nailing him to the cross, fitly expresses the temper which he maintained through the whole course of his life, even when assaulted by the heaviest provocations.

He was destined to sufferings here below, in order that he might raise his people to honor, glory, and immortality in the realms of bliss above, and, therefore, patiently—yea, joyfully—submitted to all that the malice of earth and hell could inflict.

He was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners.

Whether we consider him as a teacher, or as a man, "he did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth."

His whole life was perfectly free from spot or weakness; at the same time it was remarkable for the greatest and most extensive exercises of purity and goodness. But never to have committed the least sin in word or in deed, never to have uttered any sentiment that could be censured, upon the various topics of religion and morality which were the daily subjects of his discourses, and that through the course of a life filled with action, and led under the observation of many enemies, who had always access to converse with him, and who often came to find fault, is a pitch of perfection evidently above the reach of human nature, and consequently he who possessed it must have been Divine.

Jesus, by his death, hath set open the gates of immortality to the sons of men; and by his word, spirit, and example, graciously offers to make them meet for the glorious rewards in the kingdom of the heavenly Canaan, and to conduct them to the inheritance of the saints in light.

Let us, therefore, remember that being born under the dispensation of the gospel, we have, from our earliest years, enjoyed the best means of securing to ourselves an interest in that favor of God which is life, and that loving kindness which is better than life.

Inflamed, therefore, with the love of immortality and its joys, let us submit ourselves to our heavenly Teacher, and learn of him those graces which alone can render life pleasant, death desirable, and fill eternity with ecstatic joys.

CHAPTER XIV.

Matthew.

EMPLOYMENT OF MATTHEW; HIS CALL TO FOLLOW JESUS; WRITES HIS GOSPEL; MANNER OF HIS DEATH; PECULIAR CHRISTIAN DECISION.

MATTHEW, called also Levi, though a Roman officer, was a true Hebrew, and probably a Galilean. His trade was that of a publican, or tax-gatherer to the Romans, an office, which, by the generality of the Jews, was much detested.

The circumstances of his being called to be an apostle, were as follows: Our Saviour in one of his retired walks by the seaside, saw him sitting in his office, and called him to follow him. The man was rich, had a large and profitable employment, was a wise and prudent person, and doubtless understood what would be his loss to comply with the call of Jesus.

He was not ignorant that he must exchange wealth for poverty, a custom-house for a prison, and rich and powerful masters for a naked and despised Saviour.

But he overlooked all these considerations, left all his interest and relations, to become our Lord's disciple, and embrace a more spiritual way of living.

After this election to the apostolate, Matthew continued with the rest till the ascension of his great and beloved master; but the evangelical writers have recorded nothing particular concerning him during that period.

For the first eight years, at least, after the Saviour's ascension into heaven, he preached in different parts of Judea; but afterward, he left the country of Palestine, to convert the Gentile world.

Before his departure, he was entreated by the Jewish converts to write the history of the life and actions of the blessed

Jesus, and leave it among them as a standing monument of what he had so often delivered to them in his sermons.

This he readily complied with, and while he abode in Palestine produced his gospel; but at what time is uncertain; some believe it to have been written eight, some fifteen, and some thirty years after our Lord's ascension. It was first written in Hebrew; but soon after translated into Greek by one of the disciples.

After the Greek translation was admitted, the Hebrew copy was chiefly owned and used by the Nazarenes, a middle sect between Jews and Christians; with the former, they adhered to the rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic law, and with the latter, they believed in Christ, and embraced his religion; and hence this gospel has been styled, "The gospel according to the Hebrews," and "The Gospel of the Nazarenes."

After his leaving Judea, Matthew traveled into several parts, especially Ethiopia, but the particular places he visited are not known with any certainty.

However, after laboring indefatigably in the vineyard of his master, he suffered martyrdom in a city of Ethiopia, called Naddabar; but by what kind of death is not absolutely known; though the general opinion is, that he was slain with a halbert.

Matthew was a remarkable instance of the power of religion, in bringing men to a better temper of mind.

If we reflect upon his circumstances while he continued a stranger to the great Redeemer of mankind, we shall find that the love of the world had possessed his heart. But, notwithstanding this, no sooner did Christ call him, than he abandoned, without the least scruple or hesitation, all his riches; nay, he not only renounced his lucrative trade, but ran the greatest hazard of displeasing the masters who employed him, for quitting their service without giving them the least notice, and leaving his accounts in apparent confusion.

Had the Saviour appeared as a secular prince, clothed with temporal power and authority, it would have been no wonder for him to have gone over to his service; but when he appeared under all the circumstances of meanness and disgrace,

when he seemed to promise his followers nothing outwardly but misery and sufferings in this life, and to propose no other rewards than the invisible encouragements of another world, his change appears truly wonderful and surprising; but Divine grace can subdue all opposition.

CHAPTER XV.

Mark and Luke.

MARK'S DESCENT FROM THE TRIBE OF LEVI; HIS NUMEROUS LABORS, AND CRUEL AND AGGRAVATED DEATH. EARLY EDUCATION OF LUKE; VARIED OPINIONS AS TO HIS WRITINGS; FAMILIAR INTERCOURSE WITH PAUL.

MARK was descended from Jewish parents, and of the tribe of Levi. Nor was it uncommon among the Jews to change their names on some remarkable revolution, or accident of life, or when they intended to travel into any of the European provinces of the Roman empire.

The ancients generally considered him as one of the seventy disciples; and Epiphanius expressly tells us that he was one of those who, taking exception at our Lord's discourse of "eating his flesh, and drinking his blood, went back, and walked no more with him."

But there appears no manner of foundation for these opinions, nor likewise for that of Nicephorus, who will have him to be the son of Peter's sister.

Eusebius tells us that Mark was sent into Egypt by Peter, to preach the gospel, and accordingly planted a church in Alexandria, the metropolis of it; and his success was so very remarkable, that he converted multitudes, both of men and women, persuading them not only to embrace the christian religion, but also a life of more than ordinary strictness. Mark did not confine himself to Alexandria, and the oriental parts of Egypt, but removed westward to Lybia, passing

through the countries of Marmacia, Pentapolis, and others adjacent, where, though the people were both barbarous in their manners, and idolatrous in their worship, yet, by his preaching and miracles, he prevailed on them to embrace the tenets of the gospel: nor did he leave them till he confirmed them in the faith.

After this long tour, he returned to Alexandria, where he preached with the greatest freedom, ordered and disposed of the affairs of the church, and wisely provided for its prosperity, by constituting governors and pastors of it. But the restless enemy of the souls of men would not suffer this apostle to continue in peace and quietness; for while he was assiduously laboring in the vineyard of his Master, the idolatrous inhabitants, about the time of Easter, when they were celebrating the solemnities of Serapis, tumultuously entered the church, forced Mark, then performing divine service, from thence, and, binding his feet with cords, dragged him through the streets, and over the most craggy places, to the Bucelus, a precipice near the sea, leaving him there in a lonesome prison for that night; but his great and beloved Master appeared to him in a vision, comforting and encouraging his soul, under the ruins of his shattered body.

The next morning early, the tragedy began afresh, for they dragged him about in the same cruel and barbarous manner, till he expired. But their malice did not end with his death; they burned his mangled body, after they had so inhumanly deprived it of life.

But the christians, after the horrid tragedy was over, gathered up his bones and ashes, and decently interred them near the place where he used to preach.

His remains were afterward, with great pomp, removed from Alexandria to Venice, where they were religiously honored, and he adopted as the tutelar saint and patron of that state. It is said that he suffered martyrdom on the 25th of April, but the year is not absolutely known; the most probable opinion is, however, that it happened about the end of Nero's reign.

His gospel, the only writing he left behind him, was

written at the entreaty and earnest desire of the converts at Rome, who, not content with having heard Peter preach, pressed Mark, his fellow disciple, to commit to writing an historical account of what he had delivered to them, which he performed with equal faithfulness and brevity; and, being perused and approved by Peter, was commanded to be publicly read in their assemblies. It was frequently styled "Peter's gospel," not because he dictated it to Mark, but because the latter composed it in the same manner as Peter usually delivered his discourses to the people. And this is probably the reason of what Chrysostom observes, that in his style of expression he delights to imitate Peter, representing a great deal in a few words.

The remarkable impartiality he observes in all his relations is plain, and hence, so far from concealing the shameful lapse and denial of Peter, he describes it with more aggravating circumstances than any other evangelist.

LUKE, also a disciple of the blessed Jesus, was born at Antioch, the metropolis of Syria, a city celebrated for the pleasantness of its situation, the fertility of its soil, the riches of its commerce, the wisdom of its Senate, and the civility and politeness of its inhabitants, by the pens of some of the greatest writers of those times.

It was eminent for schools of learning, which produced the most renowned masters in the arts and sciences; so that being born, as it were, in the lap of the muses, he could not well fail of acquiring an ingenious and liberal education.

But he was not contented with the learning of his own country; he traveled for improvement into several parts of Greece and Egypt, and became particularly skilled in physic, which he made his profession.

But those who would, from this particular, infer the quality of his birth and fortune, forget that the healing art was in those early times, generally practiced by servants; and hence Grotius is of opinion that Luke was carried to Rome, and lived there as servant to some noble family, in quality of physician; but after obtaining his freedom, he returned

into his own country, and probably continued his profession till his death, it being so highly consistent with, and in many cases subservient to, the care of souls.

He was also famous for his skill in another art—namely, painting; and an ancient inscription, found in a vault near the church of Maria de Via Leata, at Rome, supposed to have been the place where Paul dwelt, mentions a picture of the blessed virgin: Una ex VII. *ab Luca depictis*, being one of the seven painted by Luke.

Luke was a Jewish proselyte; but at what time he became a christian is uncertain. It is the opinion of some, from the introduction to his gospel, that he had the facts from the reports of others, who were eye-witnesses, and suppose him to have been converted by Paul; and that he learned the history of his gospel from the conversation of that apostle, and wrote it under his direction; and that when Paul, in one of his epistles, says, "according to my gospel," he means this of Luke, which he styled *his* from the great share he had in the composition of it.

On the other hand, those who hold that he wrote his gospel from his own personal knowledge, observe that he could not receive it from Paul, as an eye-witness of the matters contained in it, because all those matters were transacted before his conversion; and that he never saw our Lord before he appeared to him in his journey to Damascus, which was some time after he ascended into heaven.

Consequently, when Paul says, "according to my gospel," he means no more than that gospel in general which he preached; the whole preaching of the apostles being styled the gospel. But, however this be, Luke became the inseparable companion of Paul in all his travels, and his constant fellow-laborer in the work of the ministry.

This infinitely endeared him to that apostle, who seems delighted with owning him for his fellow-laborer, and in calling him the "beloved physician," and the "brother whose praise is in the gospel."

Luke wrote two books for the use of the church, his gospel, and the Acts of the Apostles; both of which he dedicated to

Theophilus, which many of the ancients suppose to be a feigned name, denoting a lover of God—a title common to all sincere christians.

But others think it was a real person, because the title of "Most Excellent" is attributed to him; the usual title and form of address in those times to princes and great men.

His gospel contains the principal transactions of our Lord's life; and the particulars omitted by him, are, in general, of less importance than those of the other evangelists.

With regard to the Acts of the Apostles, written by Luke, the work was no doubt performed at Rome, about the time of Paul's imprisonment there, with which he concludes the story. It contains the actions, and sometimes the sufferings of the principal apostles, especially Paul, whose activity in the cause of Christ made him bear a great part in the labors of his Master; and Luke being his constant attendant, an eye-witness of the whole carriage of his life, and privy to his most intimate transactions, was consequently capable of giving a more full and satisfactory account of them. Among other things, he enumerates the great miracles the apostles did in confirmation of their doctine.

In both these treatises his manner of writing is exact and accurate, his style noble and elegant, sublime and lofty, yet clear and perspicuous, flowing with an easy and natural grace and sweetness, admirably adapted to a historical narrative. In short, as a historian, he was faithful in his relations, and elegant in his writings; as a minister, careful and diligent for the good of souls; as a christian, devout and pious; and, to crown all the rest, laid down his life in testimony of the gospel he had both preached and published to the world.

CHAPTER XVI.

John the Evangelist.

PECULIAR HONOR CONFERRED UPON JOHN BY THE SAVIOUR; SCENES OF HIS LABOR; HIS CRUEL TREATMENT BY DOMITIAN; DEATH AT AN ADVANCED AGE; HIS ADMIRABLE GRACES OF CHARACTER.

FROM the very minute and circumstantial account this evangelist gives of John the Baptist, he is supposed to have been one of his followers, and is thought to be that other disciple, who, in the first chapter of his gospel, is said to have been present with Andrew when John declared Jesus to be the "Lamb of God," and thereupon to have followed him to the place of his abode.

He was by much the youngest of the apostles, yet he was admitted to as great a share of his Master's confidence as any of them. He was one of those to whom he communicated the most private transactions of his life; one of those he took with him when he raised the daughter of Jairus from the dead; one of those to whom he displayed a specimen of his divinity, in his transfiguration on the Mount; one of those who were present at his conference with Moses and Elias, and heard that voice which declared him the beloved Son of God; and one of those who were companions in his solitude, most retired devotions, and bitter agonies in the garden.

These instances of particular favor our apostle endeavored in some measure to answer, by returns of particular kindness and constancy; for though he at first deserted his master on his apprehension, yet he soon recovered himself, and came back to see his Saviour, confidently entered the high-priests' hall, followed our Lord through the several particulars of his trial, and at last waited on him at his execution, owning him, as well as being owned by him, in the midst of armed soldiers, and in the thickest crowds of his most inveterate enemies.

Here it was that our great Redeemer committed to his care his sorrowful and disconsolate mother, with his dying breath; and certainly the holy Jesus could not have given a more honorable testimony of his particular respect and kindness to John, than by leaving his own mother to his trust and care, and substituting him to supply that duty he himself paid her while he resided in this vale of sorrow.

After the ascension of the Saviour of the world, when the apostles made a division of the provinces among themselves, that of Asia fell to the share of John, though he did not immediately enter upon his charge, but continued at Jerusalem till the death of the mother of Jesus, which might be about fifteen years after his ascension.

Being released from the trust committed to his care, by his dying Master, he retired into Asia, and industriously applied himself to the propagation of christianity, preaching where the gospel had not as yet been known, and confirming it where it was already planted.

Many churches of note and eminence were founded by him, particularly those of Smyrna, Pergamus, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea, and others; but his chief place of residence was at Ephesus, where Paul had, many years before, founded a church, and constituted Timothy bishop of it.

After spending several years at Ephesus, he was accused to Domitian, who had begun a persecution against the christians, as an eminent asserter of atheism and impiety, and a public subverter of the religion of the empire; so that by his command the pro-consul sent him bound to Rome, where he met with the treatment that might have been expected from so barbarous a prince, being thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil. But the Almighty, who reserved him for further services in the vineyard of his Son, restrained the heat, as he did in the fiery furnace of old, and delivered him from this seemingly unavoidable destruction.

And surely one would have thought that so miraculous a deliverance should have been sufficient to have persuaded any rational man that the religion he taught was from God,

and that he was protected from danger by the hand of Omnipotence. But miracles themselves were not sufficient to convince this cruel emperor, or abate his fury.

He ordered John to be transported to an almost desolate island in the Archipelago, called Patmos, where he continued several years, instructing the poor inhabitants in the knowledge of the christian faith; and here, about the end of Domitian's reign, he wrote his book of Revelations, exhibiting, by visions and prophetical representations, the state and condition of christianity in the future periods and ages of the church.

Upon the death of Domitian, and the succession of Nerva, who repealed all the odious acts of his predecessor, and by public edicts recalled those whom the fury of Domitian had banished, John returned to Asia, and fixed his seat again at Ephesus, the rather because the people of that city had lately martyred Timothy, their bishop.

Here, with the assistance of seven other bishops, he took upon himself the government of the large diocese of Asia Minor, and disposed of the clergy in the best manner that the circumstances of those times would permit, spending his time in an indefatigable execution of his charge, traveling from east to west to instruct the world in the principles of the holy religion he was sent to propagate.

In this manner John continued to labor in the vineyard of his great Master until death put a period to all his toils and sufferings, which happened in the beginning of Trajan's reign, in the ninety-eighth year of his age, and, according to Eusebius, his remains were buried near Ephesus.

John seems always to have led a single life; though some of the ancients tell us he was a married man.

He was polished by no study or arts of learning, but what was wanting from human art was abundantly supplied by the excellent faculties of his mind, and that fullness of divine grace, with which he was adorned.

His humility was admirable, studiously concealing his own honor; for in his epistles he never styled himself either apostle or evangelist; the title of presbyter, or elder, is all

he assumes, and probably in regard to his age as much as h[illegible] office. In his gospel, when he speaks of "the disciple Jesus loved," he constantly conceals his own [illegible] the reader to discover whom he meant.

Before he undertook the task of writing his gospel he caused a general fast to be kept by all the Asiatic churches, to implore the blessing of heaven on so great and momentous an undertaking.

When this was done, he set about the work, and completed it in so excellent and sublime a manner, that the ancients generally compared him to an eagle soaring aloft among the clouds, whither the weak eye of man was not able to follow him.

"Among all the evangelical writers," says Basil, "none are like John, the son of thunder, for the sublimity of his speech, and the height of his discourses which are beyond any man's capacity fully to reach and comprehend."

"John, as a true son of thunder," says Epiphanius, "by a loftiness of speech peculiar to himself, acquaints us, as it were, out of the clouds and dark recesses of wisdom, with the Divine doctrine of the Son of God."

Such is the character given of the writings of this great apostle and evangelist, who was honored with the endearing title of being the beloved disciple of the Son of God—a writer so profound as to deserve, by way of eminence, the character of *John the Divine.*

CHAPTER XVII.

Thomas.

DEVOTION OF THOMAS TO CHRIST; MEETING AFTER HIS RESURRECTION; PERSECUTION TO DEATH FOR HIS RIGHTEOUS LABORS.

EVANGELICAL history is entirely silent with regard to either the country or kindred of Thomas. It is, however, certain that he was a Jew, and in all probability a Galilean. He was, together with the rest, called to the apostleship, and not long after gave an eminent instance of his being ready to undergo the most melancholy fate that might attend him. For when the rest of the apostles dissuaded their Master from going into Judea, at the time of the death of Lazarus, because the Jews lately endeavored to stone him, Thomas desired them not to hinder his journey thither, though it might cost them all their lives. "Let us go," said he, "that we may die with him;" concluding that, instead of Lazarus being raised from the dead, they should all, like him, be placed in the chambers of the dust.

After the disciples had seen their great Master expire on the cross, their minds were distracted by hopes and fears concerning his resurrection, about which they were not then fully satisfied, which engaged him the sooner to make his appearance, that, by the sensible manifestations of himself, he might put the matter beyond all possibility of doubt. Accordingly, the very day in which he arose from the dead, he came into the house where they were assembled, while, for fear of the Jews, the doors about them were close shut, and gave them sufficient assurance that he was risen from the dead.

At this meeting Thomas was absent, having never probably rejoined their company since their dispersion in the garden, where every one's fears prompted him to consult his own

safety. At his return they told him that the Lord had appeared to them; but he obstinately refused to give credit to what they said, or to believe that it was really he, presuming it rather a spectre, or apparition, unless he might see the very print of the nails, and feel the wounds in his hands and side.

Our compassionate Saviour would not take the least notice of his perverse obstinacy, but on that day seven-night came again to them, as they were solemnly met at their devotions; and, calling to Thomas, bade him look upon his hands, put his fingers into the print of the nails, and thrust his hand into his side, to satisfy his faith by a demonstration from his senses. Thomas was soon convinced of his error and obstinacy, confessing that he now acknowledged him to be his Lord and Master, saying, "My Lord and my God." Our Lord answered that it was happy for him that he believed the testimony of his own senses; but that it would have been more commendable in him to have believed without seeing, because it was foretold that the Son of God should burst the chains of death, and rise again from the dead.

Thomas, as well as the rest, labored in the cause of his Divine Master, after the ascension of Christ, at first in Judea; and after the dispersion of the christian church in Jerusalem, repaired into Parthia, the province assigned him for his ministry.

After which, as Sempronius and others inform us, he preached the gospel to the Medes, Persians, Carminians, Hyrcanians, Bactarians, and the neighboring nations.

During his preaching in Persia, he is said to have met with the magi, or wise men, who had taken that long journey at our Saviour's birth to worship him, whom he baptized, and took with him as his companions and assistants in propagating the gospel.

Leaving Persia, he traveled into Ethiopia, preaching the glad tidings of the gospel, healing their sick, and working other miracles, to prove he had his commission from on high; and after traveling through these countries, he entered India.

When the Portuguese first visited these countries, after

their discovery of a passage by the Cape of Good Hope, they received the following particulars, partly from constant and uncontroverted traditions, preserved by the christians in those parts: namely, that Thomas came first to Locotora, an island in the Arabian Sea, and thence to Cranganor, where, having converted many from the error of their ways, he traveled further into the East; and having successfully preached the gospel, returned back into the kingdom of Coromandel, where, at Meliapur, the metropolis of the kingdom, not far from the mouth of the Ganges, he began to erect a place for Divine worship, till prohibited by the idolatrous priests and Sagamo, prince of that country.

But after performing several miracles, the work was suffered to proceed, and Sagamo himself embraced the christian faith, whose example was soon followed by great numbers of his friends and subjects.

This remarkable success alarmed the Brahmins, who plainly perceived that their religion would be soon extirpated, unless some method could be found of putting a stop to the progress of christianity, and therefore resolved to put the apostle to death.

At a small distance from the city was a tomb, whither Thomas retired often, for private devotion. Hither the Brahmins and their armed followers pursued him, and, while he was at prayer, they first shot at him a shower of darts; after which, one of the priests ran him through with a lance.

His body was taken up by his disciples, and buried in the church he had lately erected, and which was afterward improved into a fabric of great magnificence.

St. Chrysostom says that Thomas, who at first was the weakest and most incredulous of the apostles, became, through Christ's condescending to satisfy his scruples and the power of the Divine grace, the most active and invincible of them all; traveling over most parts of the world, and living without fear in the midst of barbarous nations; through the efficacy of that Almighty arm, which can give power to the faint, and to them that have no might, and thus make the weakest vessels to perform acts of the greatest difficulty and moment.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Andrew.

HIS PARENTAGE; CALL TO PREACH THE GOSPEL; CRUEL TREATMENT OF THE JEWS AGAINST HIM; HIS MARTYRDOM.

THIS apostle was born at Bethsaida, a city of Galilee, built on the banks of the lake of Gennesareth, and was son to John or Jonas, a fisherman of that town. He was brother to Simon Peter, but whether older or younger is not certainly known, though the generality of the ancients intimate that he was the younger. He was brought up to his father's trade, at which he labored till our blessed Saviour called him to be a fisher of men, for which he was, by some preparatory institutions, qualified even before the appearance of the Messiah.

He seems not to have remained with Jesus at his first call, but something more than a year after, as Jesus was passing through Galilee, he found Andrew and Peter, fishing on the sea, where he fully satisfied them of the greatness and divinity of his person by a miraculous draught of fishes which they took at his command. He now told them that they should enter on a different series of labors, and instead of fish, they should, by the efficacy and influence of their doctrine upon the heart and conscience, catch men,—commanding them to follow him as his immediate disciples and attendants; and accordingly they left all and followed him.

After the ascension of the blessed Jesus into heaven, and the descension of the Holy Ghost on the apostles, to qualify them for their great undertaking, Andrew, according to the generality of ancient writers, was chosen to preach the gospel in Scythia and the neighboring countries.

Accordingly he visited very many places, preaching the gospel of Christ, in all of which he met with the greatest

difficulties, but overcame them all by invincible patience and resolution.

At length he came to Sinope, a city situated on the same sea, and famous both for the birth and burial of king Mithridates.

Here he met with his brother Peter, and staid with him a considerable time. The inhabitants of the place were mostly Jews, who, partly from a zeal for their religion, and partly from their barbarous manners, were exasperated against Andrew, and entered into a confederacy to burn the house in which he lodged. But being disappointed in their design, they treated him with the most savage cruelty, throwing him on the ground, stamping upon him with their feet, pulling and dragging him from place to place; some beating him with clubs, some pelting him with stones, and others, to satisfy their brutal revenge, biting off his flesh with their teeth; till, apprehending they had entirely deprived him of life, they cast him out into the fields.

But he miraculously recovered, and returned publicly into the city; by which, and other miracles he wrought among them, many were converted from the error of their ways, and induced to become disciples of Jesus.

Departing from Sinope, he returned to Jerusalem; but he did not long continue in his native country; returning again to the province allotted him for the exercise of his ministry, which greatly flourished through the power of the Divine grace that attended it.

At last he came to Peatrea, a city of Achai, where he gave his last and greatest testimony to the gospel of his Divine master, sealing it with his blood.

Ægenas, pro-consul of Achai, being at the place, was greatly indignant that so many embraced the religion which Andrew preached, and finally, after treating him with very opprobious language, and showing him the most distinguished marks of contempt, he passed sentence on him that he should be put to death. He first ordered him to be scourged, even lictors successively whipping his naked body; and, seeing his invincible patience and constancy, commanded him to be

crucified; but to be fastened to the cross with cords instead of nails, that his death might be more lingering and tedious.

As he was led to the place of execution, walking with a cheerful and composed mind, the people cried out, that a good and innocent man was unjustly condemned to die.

On his coming near the cross, he saluted it in the following manner: "I have long desired and expected this happy hour. The cross has been consecrated by the body of Christ hanging upon it, and adorned with his members, as with so many inestimable jewels.

"I therefore come joyfully and triumphantly to it, that it may receive me as a disciple and follower of him who once hung upon it, and be the means of carrying me safe to my Master, being the instrument on which he redeemed me."

After offering up his prayers at the throne of Grace, and exhorting the people to constancy and perseverance in the faith he had delivered to them, he was fastened to the cross, on which he hung two whole days, teaching and instructing the people.

In the meantime, great interest was made to the pro-consul to spare his life; but the apostle earnestly begged of the Almighty that he might now depart, and seal the truth of his religion with his blood. His prayers were heard, and he expired, it is said, on the last day of November, but in what year is uncertain.

There seems to have been something peculiar in the form of the cross on which he suffered, and it is commonly thought to have been a cross decuscate, or two pieces of timber crossing each other in the centre, in the form of the letter X, and hence usually known by the name of St. Andrew's cross.

His body being taken down from the cross, was decently and honorably interred by Maximilia, a lady of great quality and estate, and who, Nicephorus tells us, was wife to the pro-consul.

Constantine the Great, afterward removed his body to Constantinople, and buried it in the great church he had built to the honor of the apostles; but this structure being taken down some hundred years after, in order to rebuild it,

by Justinian the emperor, the body of Andrew was found in a wooden coffin, and again deposited in its proper place.

CHAPTER XIX.

Philip.

SUPERIOR EDUCATION OF PHILIP; HIS LABORS IN TURNING MEN FROM THEIR IDOLS TO CHRIST; HIS CRUEL DEATH.

THIS apostle was a native of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter, and was honored in being first called to be a disciple of the great Messiah. Though he was a native of Galilee, it can not be doubted that he was excellently skilled in the law and the prophets. Metaphrastes assures us that he had, from his childhood, been excellently educated; that he frequently read over the books of Moses, and attentively considered the prophecies relating to the coming of the Messiah.

Nor was he idle after the honor he had received of being called to attend the Saviour of the world; he immediately imparted the glad tidings of the Messiah's appearance to his brother Nathaniel, and conducted him to his beloved Saviour.

After his being called to the apostolate we have very little recorded of him by the evangelists. It was, however, to him that our Saviour proposed the question, as to where they should find bread sufficient to satisfy the hunger of so great a multitude.

It was also to the same apostle that the Gentile proselytes, who came up to worship at Jerusalem, applied, when they were desirous of seeing the Saviour of the world.

And it was with him our Lord had the discourse a little before the Paschal Supper, recorded by John.

The compassionate Jesus had been fortifying their minds with proper considerations against his departure from them, and had told them that he was going to prepare for them a place in the mansions of the heavenly Canaan; that he was

"the way, the truth, and the life;" that "no man could come unto the Father but by him;" Philip, not thoroughly understanding the force of his Master's reasoning, begged of him that he would show them the Father. Our Lord gently reproved him, for not recognizing in him the Father's image; and gave him to understand that it was an indication of great weakness in him, after three years' education under his discipline and instruction, to appear so ignorant with regard to these particulars.

In the distribution made by the apostles of the several regions of the world, the ancients tell us that Upper Asia fell to his share, where he labored with an indefatigable diligence and industry. By the constancy and power of his preaching, and the efficacy of his miracles, he gained numerous converts, whom he baptized into the christian faith, curing at once their bodies of infirmities and distempers, and their souls of error and idolatry. He continued with them a considerable time in settling churches, and appointing them guides and ministers of religion.

After exercising the apostolic office, for several years, in all those parts, he came at last to Hierapolis, in Phrygia, a city remarkably rich and populous, but at the same time overrun with the most enormous idolatry.

Philip, being grieved to see the people so wretchedly enslaved to error and superstition, continually offered his addresses to heaven, till by his prayers, and often calling on the name of Christ, he procured the death, or at least, the vanishing of an enormous serpent, to which they paid adoration.

Having thus demolished their Deity, he demonstrated to them how ridiculous and unjust it was for them to pay such Divine honors to such odious creatures; and being aroused from their lethargy, they were ashamed of their late idolatry, and great numbers of them embraced the gospel.

This provoked the great enemy of mankind, and he had recourse to his old methods—cruelty and persecution.

The magistrates of the city seized the apostle, and having thrown him into prison, caused him to be scourged. When this preparatory cruelty was over, he was led to execution,

and, being bound, was hanged against a pillar; or, according to others, crucified.

The apostle being dead, his body was taken down by Bartholomew, his fellow-laborer in the gospel, and Mariamne, Philip's sister, the constant companion of his travels, and decently buried; after which they confirmed the people in the faith of Christ, and departed from thence.

CHAPTER XX.

Bartholomew.

NATHANIEL AND BARTHOLOMEW THE SAME CHARACTER; FIRST INTERVIEW WITH CHRIST; ACCOUNT OF HIS LABORS AND FINAL MARTYRDOM.

AMONG the twelve immediate disciples of our Lord, this apostle is mentioned under the appellation of Bartholomew, though it is evident, from divers passages of Scripture, that he was also called Nathaniel; we shall, therefore, in our account of his life, consider the names of Nathaniel and Bartholomew as belonging to one and the same person.

With regard to his descent and family, some are of opinion that he was a Syrian, and that he was descended from the Ptolemies of Egypt. But it is plain, from the evangelical history, that he was a Galilean, John having expressly told us that he was of Cana, in Galilee.

The Scripture is silent with regard to his trade and manner of life, though, from some circumstances, there is room to imagine that he was a fisherman.

He was at his first coming to Christ, conducted by Philip, who told him they had now found the long-expected Messiah, so often foretold by Moses and the prophets, "Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." And when he objected that the Messiah could not be born at Nazareth, Philip desired him to come, and satisfy himself that he was the Christ.

At his approach, the Saviour saluted him with this honor-

able appellation, that he was "an Israelite indeed, in whom there was no guile."

He was greatly surprised at our Lord's salutation, wondering how he could know him at first sight, thinking he had never before seen his face. But he was answered that he had seen him while he was yet under the fig-tree, even before Philip called him.

Convinced by this instance of our Lord's divinity, he presently made this confession, that he was now sure that Jesus was the promised Messiah, the Son of God, whom He had appointed to govern his church.

Our blessed Saviour told him that, if from this instance he could believe him to be the Messiah, he should have far greater arguments to confirm his faith; for that he should hereafter behold the heavens opened to receive him, and the angels visibly appearing to attend his triumphant entrance into the heavenly Canaan.

This apostle having his peculiar spot allotted him, for the promulgation of the gospel of his blessed Master, after the fulfillment of Christ's words, visited different parts of the world to preach the truth, and penetrated as far as higher India.

After spending considerable time at this place, and the eastern extremities of Asia, he returned to the northern and western parts, and we find him at Hierapolis, in Phrygia, laboring in concert with Philip, to plant christianity in those parts; and to convince the blind idolaters of the evil of their ways, and direct them in the paths that lead to eternal salvation.

This enraged the bigoted magistrates, and he was, together with Paul, designed for martyrdom, and in order to this, fastened to a cross; but their consciences pricking them for a time, they took him immediately down from the cross, and set him at liberty.

From hence he returned into Lycaonia, and St. Chrysostom assures us that he instructed and trained up the inhabitants in the christian discipline. His last remove was to Albanople, in great Armenia, a place miserably overrun with idola-

try, from which he labored to reclaim the people. But his endeavors to "turn them from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God," were so far from having the desired effect, that it provoked the magistrates, who prevailed on the governor to put him to death, which he cheerfully underwent, sealing the truth of the doctrine he had preached, with his blood.

CHAPTER XXI.

James the Great.

JAMES' PARENTAGE; CALL TO THE APOSTLESHIP; CHANGE OF NAME, AND PROBABLE CAUSE; HEROD PASSES SENTENCE OF DEATH UPON HIM, AND HE IS FINALLY EXECUTED.

BY way of distinction from another of that name, this apostle was surnamed the Great. He was the son of Zebedee, and by trade a fisherman, to which he applied himself with remarkable assiduity, and was exercising his employment when the Saviour of the world, passing by the sea of Galilee, saw him with his brother in the ship, and called them both to be his disciples. Nor was the call in vain; they cheerfully complied with it, and immediately left all to follow him; readily delivering themselves up to perform whatever service he should appoint them.

Soon after this, he was called from the station of an ordinary disciple, to the apostolical office, and was even honored with some particular favor beyond most of the apostles, being one of the three whom our Lord made choice of as his companions in the more intimate transactions of his life, from which the rest were excluded. Thus, with Peter and his brother John, he attended his Master when he raised the daughter of Jairus from the dead. He was admitted to Christ's glorious transfiguration on the mount; and when the holy Jesus was to undergo his bitter agonies in the garden,

as preparatory sufferings to his passion, James was one of three taken to be a spectator of them. Nor was it the least instance of that particular honor our Lord conferred upon these apostles, that, at his calling them to the apostleship, he gave them a new name and title: Simon he called Peter, or a *rock;* and James and John, who were brothers, *Boanerges*, or the *sons of thunder.*

Some think that this name was given them on account of their loud and bold preaching the gospel to the world, fearing no threatenings, despising all opposition, and going on thundering in the ears of a drowsy and sleepy world; rousing and awakening the consciences of men with the earnestness and vehemence of their preaching, which resembled thunder, as the voice of God powerfully shakes the natural world, and breaks in pieces the cedars of Lebanon. Others think it relates to the doctrines they delivered, teaching the great mysteries, and promulgating the gospel in a more profound and lofty strain than the rest. But however this be, our blessed Saviour doubtless alluded, by this term, to the naturally furious and resolute disposition of these two brothers, who seem to have been of a more fiery temper than the rest of the apostles, of which we have this memorable instance: when our Lord was determined on his journey to Jerusalem, he sent some of his disciples before him to make preparations for his coming; but on their entering a village of Samaria, they were rudely rejected, from the old grudge that subsisted between the Samaritans and Jews, and because our Saviour, by going up to Jerusalem, seemed to slight their place of worship on Mount Gerizim. This piece of rudeness and inhumanity was so highly resented by James and his brother, that they came to Jesus, desiring to know if he would not imitate Elias, by calling down fire from heaven to consume this barbarous, inhospitable people. Thus we find that the best of men are but men, and that corrupt nature will sometimes appear even in renewed minds. But the holy Jesus soon convinced them of their mistake, by telling them that, instead of destroying, he was come to save the lives of the children of men.

Sophronius tells us that after the ascension of the blessed Jesus, this apostle preached to the dispersed Jews,—that is, to those converts who were dispersed after the death of Stephen.

The Spanish writers affirm that, after preaching the gospel in several parts of Judea and Samaria, he visited Spain, where he planted christianity, and appointed some select disciples to perfect what he had begun; but if we consider the shortness of James' life, and that the apostles continued in a body at Jerusalem, even after the dispersion of the other christians, we shall find it difficult to allow time sufficient for so tedious and difficult a voyage as that was in those early ages; and therefore it is safest to confine his ministry to Judea and the adjacent countries.

Herod, who was a bigot to the Jewish religion, as well as desirous of acquiring the favor of the Jews, began a violent persecution of the Christians, and his zeal against them animated him to pass sentence of death immediately on the apostle James.

As he was led to the place of execution, the officer that guarded him to the tribunal, or rather his accuser, having been converted by that remarkable courage and constancy shown by the apostle at the hour of trial, repented of what he had done, came and fell down at the apostle's feet, and heartily begged pardon for what he had said against him.

The holy man, after recovering from his surprise, tenderly embraced him. "Peace," said he, "my son; peace be unto thee, and pardon of thy faults."

Upon which the officer publicly declared himself a christian, and both were beheaded at the same time.

Thus fell the great apostle James, being the first who gained the crown; and taking cheerfully that cup of which he had long since told his Lord he was ready to drink.

CHAPTER XXII.

James the Less.

DOUBT AS TO HIS IDENTITY; FAITHFULNESS AS A BISHOP; HIS ENEMIES, IN CONSEQUENCE, PUT HIM TO A CRUEL DEATH.

IT has been doubted by some whether this was the same with that James who was afterward bishop of Jerusalem, two of this name being mentioned in the sacred writings—namely—James the Great, and James the Less, both apostles.

Opinions, however, to the contrary, are built upon a sandy foundation; for nothing is plainer than that James the apostle, whom Paul calls our Lord's brother, and reckons, with Peter and John, one of the pillars of the church, was the same who presided among the apostles, doubtless by virtue of his episcopal office, and determined the causes in the synod of Jerusalem.

After the resurrection, he was honored with a particular appearance of our Lord to him, which, though passed over in silence by the evangelists, is recorded by Paul.

Some time after this appearance, he was chosen bishop of Jerusalem, preferred before all the rest for his near relation to Christ; and when Paul came to Jerusalem, after his conversion, he applied to him, and was by him honored with the right hand of fellowship.

It was to James, that Peter sent the news of his miraculous deliverance out of prison; "Go," said he, "show these things unto James, and to the brethren"—that is, to the whole church, especially to James, the pastor of it.

He performed every part of his duty with all possible care and industry, omitting no particular necessity to be observed by a diligent and faithful guide of souls; but a person so careful, so successful in his charge, could not fail of exciting the spite and malice of his enemies.

They were vexed to see Paul had escaped their hands by appealing unto Cæsar; and therefore turned their fury against James; but being unable to effect their design under the government of Festus, they determined to attempt it under the procuratorship of Albinus, his successor,—Arsanus the younger, of the sect of the Sadducees, being high-priest.

In order to this a council was assembled, and the apostle with others arraigned and condemned as violaters of the law. But that the action might appear more plausible and popular, the Scribes and Pharisees, masters in the art of dissimulation, endeavored to ensnare him; and, at their first coming, told him that they had all placed the greatest confidence in him; that the whole nation, as well as they, gave him the title of a just man, and one that was no respector of persons; that they therefore desired he would correct the error and false opinion the people had conceived of Jesus, whom they considered as the Messiah, and take this opportunity of the universal confluence to the Paschal solemnity, to set them right in this particular, and would go with them to the top of the temple, where he might be seen and heard by all.

The apostle readily consented, and, being advantageously placed on a pinnacle of the temple, they addressed him in the following manner: "Tell us—for we have all the reason in the world to believe, that the people are thus generally led away with the doctrine of Jesus, who was crucified—tell us, what is this institution of the crucified Jesus?"

To which the apostle answered in an audible voice, "Why do you inquire of Jesus, the Son of man? He sits in heaven, at the right hand of the Majesty on high, and wilt come again in the clouds of heaven."

The people below, hearing this, glorified the blessed Jesus, and openly proclaimed, "Hosanna to the Son of David!"

The Scribes and Pharisees now perceived that they had acted foolishly; that instead of altering, they had confirmed the people in their belief; and that there was no way left but to dispatch him immediately, in order to warn others, by his sufferings, not to believe in Jesus of Nazareth.

Accordingly, they suddenly cried out, that James himself

was seduced, and become an impostor; and they immediately threw him from the pinnacle of the temple on which he stood, into the court below; but not being killed on the spot, he recovered himself so far as to rise on his knees, and pray fervently to heaven for his murderers.

But malice is too diabolical to be pacified with kindness, or satisfied with cruelty.

Accordingly, his enemies, vexed that they had not fully accomplished their work, poured a shower of stones upon him, while he was imploring their forgiveness at the throne of grace; and one of them, dissatisfied with this cruel treatment, put an end to his misery with a fuller's club.

Thus did this great and good man finish his course, in the ninety-sixth year of his age, and about twenty-four years after his blessed Lord's ascension into heaven.

His death was lamented by all good men, even by the sober and just persons among the Jews, themselves, as Josephus himself confesses.

He was a man of exemplary piety and devotion, educated under the strictest rules and institutions of religion. Prayer was his constant business and delight; he seemed as it were to have lived upon it, and continually to have had his conversation in heaven; and he who has told us, "that the prayer of a righteous man availeth much," found it so by his own experience, heaven lending a more immediate ear to his petitions; so that in a time of remarkable drought, on his praying for rain, the clouds melted into fruitful showers.

He was indeed a man of so divine and holy a temper, that he was at once the love and wonder of his age; and from the reputation of his holy and religious life, was styled *James the Just.*

CHAPTER XXIII.

Simon and Jude.

SIMON BELONGS TO THE ZEALOTS, A SECT BY THAT NAME; ZEAL FOR CHRIST AFTER HIS CONVERSION; DEATH AND BURIAL UNKNOWN. SCENE OF JUDE'S LABORS; HIS PROLONGED SUCCESS IN THE MINISTRY.

IN the catalogue of the apostles, Simon is styled *Simon the Canaanite*, whence some conjecture he was born in Cana of Galilee; and others will have him to have been the bridegroom mentioned by John, at whose marriage the Saviour turned the water into wine.

But this word has no relation to his country, or the place of his nativity, being derived from the Hebrew word, *kana*, which signifies zeal, and denotes a warm and sprightly temper.

What some of the evangelists, therefore, call Canaanite, others, rendering the Hebrew by the Greek word, style him Zealot; not so much for his great zeal, his ardent affection to his Master, and his desire of advancing his religion in the world, as from his active, warm temper, and zealous forwardness in some particular sect of religion before his coming to the Saviour.

In order to understand this the better, it will be necessary to observe that, as there were several sects and parties among the Jews, so there was one, either a distinct sect, or at least, a branch of the Pharisees, called the sect of the Zealots. They were continually prompting the people to throw off the Roman yoke, and assert their natural liberty,—taking care, when they had thrown all things into confusion, to make their own advantage of the tumult, and hereby came to be considered as the pest of the nation.

But whatever Simon was before, we have no reason to suspect but that, after his conversion, he was very zealous

for the honor of his Master, and considered all those who were enemies to Christ, as enemies to himself, however near they might be to him in any natural relation.

And as he was very exact in all the practical duties of the christian religion, so he showed a very serious and pious indignation toward those who professed religion and a faith in Christ with their mouths, but dishonored their sacred profession by their irregular and vicious lives, as some of the first professing christians really did.

Simon continued in communion with the rest of the apostles and disciples at Jerusalem; and at the feast of Pentecost, received the same miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost, so that he was qualified, with the rest of the brethren, for the apostolic office; and in propagating the gospel of the Son of God, we can not doubt of his exercising his gifts with the same zeal and fidelity, though in what part of the world is uncertain.

Some say that he went into Egypt, Cyrene, and Africa, preaching the gospel to those romote from the influence of christian truth; and others add, that after he had passed through those burning wastes, he took ship, and visited the frozen regions of the north, preaching the gospel to the inhabitants of the western parts, and even in Britain, where, having converted great multitudes, and sustained the greatest hardships and persecutions, he was at last crucified, and buried, but the place where is unknown.

THE next apostle, Jude, is mentioned by three several names in the evangelical history—namely, Jude or Judas, Thaddeus, and Lebbeus. He was brother to James the Less, afterward bishop of Jerusalem, being the son of Joseph, the reputed father of Christ, by a former wife.

It is not known when, or by what means, he became a disciple of our blessed Saviour, nothing being said of him till we find him in the catalogue of the twelve apostles; nor afterward, till Christ's last supper, when discoursing with him about his departure, and comforting them with a promise that he would return to them again, meaning after his resurrection, though the "world should see him no more," our apostle said

to his Master, "Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself to us, and not unto the world?"

Paulinus tells us, that the province which fell to the share of Jude in the apostolic division of the provinces, was Libya, but he does not tell whether it was the Cyrenean Libya, which is thought to have received the gospel from Mark, or the more southern parts of Africa.

But, however that be, in his first setting out to preach the gospel, he traveled up and down Judea and Galilee; then through Samaria into Idumea, and to the cities of Arabia and the neighboring countries, and afterward to Syria and Mesopotamia. Nicephorus adds, that he came at last to Edessa, where Abagarus governed, and where Thaddeus, one of the seventy, had already sown the seeds of the gospel. Here he perfected what the other had begun; and having, by his sermons and miracles, established the religion of Jesus, he died in peace; but others say that he was slain at Berytus, and honorably buried there.

The writers of the Latin church are unanimous in declaring that he traveled into Persia, where, after great success in his apostolic ministry for many years, he was at last, for his freely and openly reproving the superstitious rites and customs of the magi, cruelly put to death.

Jude left only one epistle, which is placed the last of those seven styled *catholic*, in the sacred canon. It has no particular inscription, as the other six have, but is thought to have been primarily intended for the Christian Jews, in their several dispersions, as Peter's epistles were.

It was some time before this epistle was generally received in the church. The author, indeed, like James, John, and sometimes Paul himself, does not call himself an apostle, styling himself only the servant of Christ. But he has added what is equivalent: "Jude, the brother of James," a character that can belong to no one but this apostle. And surely the humility of a follower of Jesus should be no objection against his writings.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Peter.

FIRST INTERVIEW WITH JESUS AND HIS CALL; DENIAL OF CHRIST; MEETING WITH JESUS AFTER HIS RESURRECTION; BOLDNESS IN PREACHING.

SAINT Peter was born at Bethsaida, a city of Galilee, situate on the banks of the lake of Genesareth, called also the sea of Galilee, from its being situated in that country, and the lake of Tiberias, from that city being built on its banks.

But the particular time of this great apostle's birth can not be known; the evangelists and other writers among the primitive christians having been silent with regard to this particular. It is, however, pretty certain that he was at least ten years older than his Master; the circumstances of his being married and in a settled course of life, when he first became a follower of the great Messiah, and that authority and respect the gravity of his person procured him among the rest of the apostles, are thought sufficiently to declare this conjecture to be very near the truth.

As he was a descendant of Abraham, he was circumcised according to the rites of the Mosaic law, and called by his parents, Simon, or Simeon, a name common at that time among the Jews. But after his becoming a disciple of the blessed Jesus, the additional title of Cephas was conferred upon him by his Master, to denote the firmness of his faith; the word cephas, in the Syriac, the common language of the Jews at that time, signifying a *stone*, or *rock;* hence we call him Peter, which implies the same thing.

With regard to the parents of Peter, the evangelists have also been silent, except in telling us that his father's name was Jonas, who was highly honored by our blessed Saviour, who chose two of his sons, Andrew and Peter, to be his apostles, and preachers of the glad tidings of salvation to the children of men.

Peter in his youth was brought up to the trade of fishing on the lake of Bethsaida, where he followed it for some time, but afterward removed to Capernaum, where he settled; for we find he had a house there when our Saviour began his public ministry, and there he paid tribute.

His business was both mean and servile; exposing him to all the injuries of the weather, the tempestuousness of the sea, and the darkness and horror of the night, and all to acquire a mean livelihood for himself and family.

But meanness of worldly degree is no obstacle to the favor of God. Indeed, the chosen friends and votaries of christianity, are oftener persons of humble and lowly stations in life, than the great, the dignified, and the opulent.

Of what sect the apostle was, sacred history hath not ascertained.

His readiness and curiosity at the first news of Christ's appearance, to come to him and converse with him, shows that his expectations had been awakened, and some glimmering rays of hope conveyed to him by the preaching and ministry of John, who was "the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his path straight.

He became acquainted with the immaculate Lamb of God, in the following manner:

His brother, having heard from John the Baptist, a description of the character of Jesus, who not only told them of him, but pointed him out personally, was greatly rejoiced at the discovery, hastened to Simon, and with rapture exclaimed, "I have found that eminent person so long and signally foretold by the prophets, and whom all the devout and pious among the sons of Jacob so earnestly expected."

Simon, who was one of those who waited for redemption in Israel, ravished with this joyful news, and impatient of delay, presently followed his brother to the place; and on his arrival the Saviour immediately gave him a proof of his divinity, saluting him at first sight by his name, and telling him both who he was, his name and kindred, and what title should soon be conferred upon him.

Peter, however, seems not to have followed Jesus at this

time, but returned to his fishing on the lake, where the Redeemer afterward found him.

Having occasion at a certain time, to get into Simon's boat, to avoid the multitude who pressed upon him, he ordered that the boat be put from the shore, and the net cast into the sea. To which Simon answered, that they had labored the preceding night, and had taken nothing; and if they could not then succeed, there was little hopes of it now, as the day was far less proper for fishing than the night. But as his Master was pleased to command, he would obey; and accordingly he let down his net, when, to the astonishment both of himself and his companions, so great a multitude of fishes were inclosed, that they were obliged to call their partners to their assistance.

Amazed at this miraculous draught of fishes, Simon Peter, in an ecstacy of admiration, blended with awe and humility, fell prostrate at his Master's feet, acknowledging himself to be a vile and sinful person, and thinking himself unworthy of being admitted into the presence of one so immediately sent from God. But the compassionate Son of the Most High kindly removed his fears, telling him that this miracle was wrought to confirm his faith, and indicate to him that the Almighty had appointed a more noble employment for him, that of saving the souls of the children of men.

From this time Peter and his companions became the constant and inseparable disciples of the great Messiah, submitting themselves to the rules of his discipline, and living under his institutions.

Peter became one of the chosen twelve, selected to be in attendance on the blessed Saviour, to perform his holy pleasure. He accompanied his Master to the house of Jairus, on the occasion of his restoring to life the ruler's daughter; and from this time we have no account of him in particular till the night after our Saviour's miraculously feeding the multitude in the wilderness.

Then, as Jesus was walking toward his disciples on the raging, tempest-tossed sea, Peter, who was always remarkable for bold resolutions, desired his Master to give him leave to

come to him on the water; and, on obtaining permission, he left the ship, and walked on the sea to meet his Saviour.

But when he heard the deep roar around him, and the waves increase, he began to be afraid; and as his faith declined, his body sunk in the water, so that, in the greatest agony, he called for assistance to him who was able to save.

His cry was heard, and the reproof given, "O, thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"

As Jesus was discoursing the next day on the *true bread from heaven*, in allusion to the miracle of the loaves, many left him, upon which he turned to his disciples, and asked them if they also would go away. To which Peter replied in a manner that showed his confidence, "Lord, whither shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

Then in order to test them, he inquired what they thought of him, and Peter again unhesitatingly speaks, "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God."

This full and comprehensive declaration satisfied the Saviour, who answered, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my father which is in heaven."

That is, this faith which thou hast now confessed is not human, or built upon the testimony of men, but upon the knowledge which I was sent from God to reveal unto the world; therefore I say also unto thee, "that thou art Peter. and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

As thy name signifies a rock, so shalt thou prove firm. solid, and immovable in building my church, which shall be so firmly established by thy care and diligence, upon that faith thou hast now professed, that all the assaults of men and devils shall not be able to destroy it.

The disciples had no idea that their Master was to suffer death for the sins of the world; and when he related to them what he must undergo, Peter, who could not endure the thought of his Lord's suffering even the least punishment, much less those cruelties he had mentioned, and at last death

itself, interrupted him very unseasonably, and said, "Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee."

But the Saviour, who came down from heaven to give his life a ransom for the sins of the world, and who valued the redemption of mankind infinitely more than his own ease and safety, highly resented this speech, and accordingly returned the sharp reproof, "Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offense unto me."

Soon after, we see him one of the favored three who ascend the mount of transfiguration, and while the heavenly scene was being enacted there, he fell asleep, and on waking, was surprised to see him surrounded with unutterable glory, and Moses and Elias talking with him.

Silence was preserved till those visitants from the courts of heaven were going to depart, when Peter, in a rapture and ecstasy of mind, addressed himself to his Master, declaring infinite pleasure and delight in being favored with this glorious spectacle, and desired his leave to erect three tabernacles—one for him, and one for each of the two prophets. But at this moment, a voice from heaven declared the divinity of Christ, which filled the disciples with fear; and as he touched them, bidding them dismiss their fears, they looked up, and saw their Master only.

Peter, also, was one of those who were sent to make preparations for celebrating the Passover.

While Jesus was washing his disciples' feet on this occasion, he came to Peter, who would by no means permit him to perform so mean and condescending an office. What! the Son of God stoop to wash the feet of a sinful mortal!—a thought which shocked the apostle, who strenuously declared, "Thou shalt never wash my feet."

But Jesus told him that if he washed him not, he could have no part with him,—insinuating that this action was mystical, and signified the remission of sins and the purifying virtue of the Spirit of the Most High, to be poured out upon all true christians. This answer sufficiently removed the scruples of Peter, who cried out, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." Wash

me in every part, rather than let me lose my portion in thee.

During the solemn institution of the supper, Jesus again told them of his death, and final departure from them. Peter, not well understanding what he meant, asked him whither he was going; to which he replied, that he was going to that place whither he could not now, but should hereafter follow him, intimating the martyrdom he was to suffer for his Master's religion.

Peter answered that he was now ready to follow him, even if it required him to lay down his life.

This confident presumption was not at all agreeable to the blessed Jesus, who told him he had promised great things, but would be so far from performing them, that before the cock crew, he would thrice deny his Master.

Supper being now ended, they sung a hymn, and departed to the Mount of Olives, where Jesus again put them in mind how greatly the things he was going to suffer would offend them. To which Peter replied, that though all men should be offended because of him, yet he himself would never be offended.

How far will an indiscreet zeal and affection transport even a good man into vanity and presumption! Peter questions the fidelity of others, but never doubts his own, though his Lord had just before reproved him for his self-sufficiency. This confidence of Peter inspired the rest of the apostles with courage, so that they declared their constant and unshaken adherence to their Master.

They now repaired to the garden of Gethsemane; and, leaving the rest of the apostles near the entrance, the Saviour took with him Peter, and two other disciples, and retired into the most solitary part of the garden, where he labored under the bitterest agony human nature ever endured. During this, his disciples were asleep, and after three several looks at them, he called to Peter, and how must the words have touched his heart, "Could ye not watch with me one hour?"

They awoke, and while the Saviour was discoursing with them, a band of soldiers from the chief priests and elders,

preceded by the traitor Judas, to conduct and direct them, rushed into the garden, and seized the great High Priest of our profession.

Peter, whose ungovernable zeal would admit of no restraint, drew his sword, and, without the least order from his Master, struck at one of the persons who seemed to be remarkably busy in binding Jesus, and cut off his right ear. This wild and unwarrantable zeal was very offensive to the Saviour, who rebuked Peter, and entreated the patience of the soldiers, while he miraculously healed the wound.

Now the fidelity of the apostles, which they had urged with so much confidence, was put to the trial.

They saw their Master in the hands of a rude and inconsiderate band of men, but, instead of assisting and comforting him, they all forsook him, and fled.

He was carried from one tribunal to another, and, in the mean time, Peter, who had followed the other disciples in their flight, recovered his spirits; and being encouraged by his companion, John, returned to seek his Master, and seeing him led toward the high priest's hall, followed at a distance to know the event; but on his coming to the door, was refused admittance, till one of the disciples, who was acquainted there, came out, and prevailed upon the servant who kept the door to let him in. Peter, being admitted, repaired to the fire, burning in the middle of the hall, around which the officers and servants were standing; where, being observed by the maid-servant who let him in, she charged him with being one of Christ's disciples; but he publicly denied the charge, declaring that he did not know him, and presently withdrew into the porch, where he heard the cock crow, an intimation seemingly sufficient to awaken his conscience into a quick sense of his duty, and the promise he had a few hours before made to his Master. But, alas! human nature, when left to itself, is remarkably frail and inconstant.

This Peter sufficiently experienced; for while he continued in the porch, another maid met him, and charged him with being one of the followers of Jesus of Nazareth, which Peter

firmly denied, and, the better to gain belief, ratified it with an oath. About an hour after this, the servant of the high priest, he whose ear Peter had cut off, charged him with being a disciple of Christ, and that he himself had seen him in the garden with him; adding, that his very speech sufficiently proved that he was a Galilean.

Peter, however, still denied the fact; and added to his sin, by ratifying it not only by an oath, but by a solemn curse and execration, that he was not the person; that he knew not the man.

But no sooner had he uttered the denial, than the cock crew; at which his Master turned about, and earnestly looked upon him,—a look that pierced him to the heart, and brought to his remembrance what his Saviour had more than once foretold, that he would basely and shamefully deny him.

Peter was now no longer able to contain his sorrow; he flew from the palace of the high priest, and wept bitterly, passionately bewailing his folly, and the aggravation of his sin.

Thus have we in Peter a sad warning for our instruction. His fall should convince us of the miserable frailty of the best men, and effectually subdue those vain confidences which are apt to rise in our hearts, from our own supposed strength and firmness.

It is certain, from various circumstances, that Peter, after the crucifixion of his Lord and Master, staid at Jerusalem, or, at least, in the neighborhood; for when Mary Magdalene returned from the sepulchre, to inform the disciples that the stone was rolled away from the door, and the body not to be found, Peter and John set out immediately for the garden. John, who was the younger, arrived at the sepulchre first, looked into it, but did not enter, either out of fear, or reverence to his Saviour. Peter came soon after, and resolutely went into the sepulchre, where he found the linen clothes lying together in one place, and the napkin that was about his head, wrapped together in another,—a sufficient indication that the body was not stolen away; for, had that been the case, so much care would not have been observed.

But Peter did not long wait in suspense, for the same day Jesus appeared to him, and as he was the first of the disciples who had made a signal confession of the divinity of the Messiah's mission, so it was reasonable he should first see him after his resurrection; at the same time, to convince him that the crime he had been guilty of, in denying him, was pardoned, and that he was come, like the good Samaritan, to pour oil into his wounded conscience.

Peter, and some other disciples, returned to their old trade of fishing on the lake. Soon after, Jesus appeared to them, standing on the shore, being first recognized by the beloved disciple; and no sooner had Peter heard John declare his opinion concerning him, than his zeal took fire; and, notwithstanding the coldness of the season, he girt on his fisher's coat, threw himself into the sea, and swam to shore,—his impatience to be with his dear Lord and Master not suffering him to stay the few minutes necessary to bring the ship to land.

As soon as the disciples came on shore, they found a repast prepared for them by the power of their Divine Lord, and this being ended, the Saviour addressed himself particularly to Peter, urging him to the utmost diligence in the care of souls; and because he knew that nothing but a sincere love to himself could support him under the troubles and dangers of so laborious and difficult an employment, he inquired of him whether he loved him more than the rest of the apostles, mildly reproving him for his over-confident resolution.

Peter, whom fatal experience had taught humility, modestly answered, that none knew so well as himself the integrity of his affections.

Thou knowest the hearts of all men; nothing is hid from thee; and therefore thou knowest that I love thee.

The question was three several times repeated by our blessed Saviour, and as often-times answered by the apostle, it being but just that he who, by a three-fold denial, had given so much reason to question his affection, should now, by a three-fold confession, give more than common assurance of his sincere love for his Master; and to each of these

confessions the Saviour added this signal trial of his affection, "Feed my sheep."

Jesus having thus engaged Peter to a cheerful compliance with the dangers that might attend the discharge of his office, particularly intimated to him the fate that would attend him; telling him, that when he was young he girt himself, lived at his pleasure, and went wherever his fancy directed him; but when he should reach the term of old age, he should stretch forth his hands, and another should gird and bind him, and lead him whither he had no desire to go, intimating, as the evangelists tell us, "by what death he should glorify God." Peter was well pleased to drink the bitter cup, and make his confession as public as his denial, providing all would be sufficient to prove the sincerity of his love.

Not long after this, Jesus took his last farewell of his disciples, and ascended up into heaven.

The apostles, though deprived of the personal presence of their dear Lord and Master, were indefatigable in fulfilling the commission they had received from him.

The first object that engaged their attention, after their return to Jerusalem, was to fill up the vacancy in their number, lately made by the unhappy fall and apostacy of Judas.

In order to this, they called together the church, and entered into an upper room, when Peter, as president of the assembly, proposed to them the choice of a new apostle.

He put them in mind that Judas, one of the disciples of their beloved Lord, being betrayed by his covetous and insatiable temper, had lately fallen from the honor of his place and ministry.

That this was no more than what the prophet had long since foretold should come to pass, and that the care of the church, which had been committed to him, should devolve upon another; that therefore it was highly necessary that the same person who had been familiarly conversant with the blessed Jesus from first to last, and consequently a competent witness both of his doctrine and miracles, his death, resurrection, and ascension, should be substituted in his room. It was highly requisite that such an apostle should be chosen,

and accordingly two candidates were proposed; Joseph, called Barsabas, and Matthias, both qualified for the great and important work. Having prayed that Divine providence would guide and direct their choice, they cast lots, and it fell upon the latter, who was admitted at once into their number.

After filling this vacancy, they spent their time in prayer and meditation till the feast of Pentecost, when the promise of their great Master in sending the Holy Ghost was fulfilled, in a remarkable manner, having the appearance of "cloven tongues of fire, resting upon each one of them."

This surprising transaction produced different effects on the minds of the people, some attributing it to the effect of a miracle, and others to the power of new wine; upon which the apostles all stood up, and Peter, in the name of the rest, undertook to confute this injurious calumny.

He told them that this scandalous slander proceeded from the spirit of malice and falsehood; that their censure was uncharitable as it was unjust; that it was early in the morning, and therefore not a time for drinking, especially on a day set apart for devotion; that these extraordinary and miraculous effects were but the accomplishment of an ancient prophecy, which the Almighty had expressly declared should be fulfilled in the times of the Messiah.

He continued boldly to explain the prophecies, and declare Christ to be the promised Saviour.

This discourse, though the first that Peter ever made in public, deeply affected the audience, and every word, like a dagger, pierced them to the heart; so that they cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

To which Peter answered, The only way to expiate your guilt, obtain pardon for the many sins you have committed, and acquire the gifts of the Holy Ghost, is to repent sincerely, and be baptized into the religion of this crucified Saviour.

He also used the most forcible and endearing expressions to prevail on them to listen to the inviting calls of the Son of God, and by that means to save themselves from the unavoidable ruin and destruction, which would shortly fall on the heads of the wicked and headstrong generation of unbe

lieving Jews. The effect of this discourse was equally wonderful and surprising; for vast numbers of those who before ridiculed the religion of Jesus, now acknowledged him for their Saviour, and flew to him for refuge from the impending storm.

Soon after this wonderful effusion of the Holy Spirit, Peter and John, going up to the temple about three in the afternoon, near the conclusion of one of the solemn hours of prayer, they saw a poor, impotent cripple, near forty years of age, who had been lame from his birth, lying at the "Beautiful Gate" of the temple, and asking alms of those who entered the sacred edifice.

This miserable object moved their compassion; and Peter beholding him with attention, said, The riches of this world, the silver and gold so highly coveted by the sons of men, are not in my power to bestow; but I possess the power of restoring life and health, and am ready to assist thee.

Then taking the man by the hand, he commanded him in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, to rise up and walk.

Immediately his nerves and sinews were enlarged, and the several parts of his diseased members performed their natural functions. Upon which the man accompanied them into the temple, walking, leaping, and praising God.

So strange and extraordinary a cure filled the minds of the people with admiration, and their curiosity drew them around the apostles to view the men who had performed it.

Peter, seeing the multitude gathering round them, took the opportunity of speaking to them of the way of salvation through a crucified Redeemer.

The amazing success Peter and John met with, could not fail of exciting the envy and attention of the rulers of Israel, who seized them, and put them in prison.

The next day they were carried before the Jewish Sanhedrim, and being asked by what power and authority they had done this, Peter boldly answered, Be it known unto you and to all the descendants of Jacob, that this miracle was wrought wholly in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, whom ye yourselves have crucified and slain, and whom the Almighty

hath raised again from the dead. Nor is there any other way by which you, or any of the sons of men can be saved, but by this crucified Saviour.

This boldness of the apostle was admired by all, even by the court of the Sanhedrim, and after beholding them with a kind of astonishment, they were ordered to withdraw, while they debated among themselves what was proper to be done.

They were finally forbidden to preach the gospel of Christ, but in answer to prayer they were replenished with fresh measures of the Holy Spirit, and enabled to continue with new ardor and boldness in proclaiming Christ's purchased salvation.

Many sold their possessions and gave all they had into the common treasury, for the promotion of the great work. Ananias and his wife Sapphira, were two who pretended to do thus, yet kept back part, hoping to deceive those who were guided by the Spirit of Omnipotence. Peter, on his first coming in, asked Ananias how he could suffer Satan to fill his heart with such enormous wickedness, as to think to deceive the Holy Ghost. That before it was sold, it was wholly in his own power, and afterward the money entirely at his own disposal; so that his action was capable of no other interpretation than that he had not only abused and injured man, but mocked the Almighty himself, who he must know was privy to his most secret thoughts. The apostle had no sooner finished, than Ananias, to the great surprise of all who were present, fell down dead by a stroke from heaven.

Not long after this his wife came in, whom Peter reproved in the same manner he did her husband, adding that she should immediately end her life in the same manner; upon which she was smitten by the hand of Omnipotence, and fell down dead, sharing with her husband in the punishment, as she had before in the heinous crime.

But such instances of severity were very extraordinary; the power of the apostles was generally exerted in works of mercy and beneficence toward the sons and daughters of affliction. They cured all kinds of diseases, and cast out

devils, so that they brought the sick into the streets, and laid them upon beds and couches, that the shadow at least, of Peter, as he passed by, might cover some of them; well knowing that a single touch or word was sufficient to remove the most inveterate disease.

The apostles were again interrupted in their work, by the interference of the rulers, who put them in prison.

Their power, however, was limited, and like the drop of a bucket to the ocean, when opposed to the Almighty arm of the great Jehovah.

The prison doors, though fastened with the utmost caution, opened of themselves at the approach of a messenger from the courts of heaven, who commanded the apostles to leave the dungeon, repair to the temple, and preach the glad tidings of the gospel to the people.

The officers, returning in the morning, found the prison doors shut and guarded, but the prisoners were gone.

This remarkable circumstance greatly alarmed them, and they repaired to the council to acquaint them with what had happened. The rulers were astonished at the news; but hearing that the apostles were preaching in the temple, they sent an officer to bring them, with the least violence to their persons, before the Sanhedrim. Their orders were soon obeyed, and the disciples of Jesus placed before the same court that had so lately condemned their Master.

The high priest asked them how they dared to propagate a doctrine they had lately so strictly charged them not to preach; to which Peter, with characteristic boldness replied, "We certainly ought to obey God, rather than man."

Thus true was Peter's devotion, ever after his bitter repentings which succeeded the denial of his Lord.

CHAPTER XXV.

MIRACLES PERFORMED BY PETER; HIS VISION; SUCCESS OF HIS PREACHING REMARKABLE DELIVERANCE FROM PRISON; BANISHMENT FROM ROME; SECOND IMPRISONMENT, AND FINAL MARTYRDOM.

THE apostles who continued at Jerusalem were soon informed of the remarkable success of the ministry of one Philip, a deacon, at Samaria, and thought necessary to send him assistance.

Accordingly Peter and John were deputed to this infant church; who, having prayed and laid their hands on the new converts, they received the Holy Ghost.

Such miraculous gifts astonished Simon, a magician of the place, and, desirous of obtaining the same privilege, he offered the disciples money to invest him with this power, that on whomsoever he laid his hands, he might receive the Holy Spirit.

But Peter, who perceived the insincerity of his heart, rejected his offer with scorn and detestation. "Thy money," said the great apostle, "perish with thee." And as thy heart is full of hypocrisy and deceit, thou canst have no share nor portion in so great a privilege. Simon was terrified at the speech of Peter; his conscience flew in his face, and he prayed the apostles to make intercession for him at the throne of grace, that the Almighty might pardon his sin, and not inflict on him those heavy judgments.

The apostles did not stay any longer in Samaria than was necessary to confirm the faith of the new converts, and preach the gospel in the adjacent villages; after which they returned to Jerusalem.

The storm, though violent, being at length blown over, the church enjoyed a time of calmness and serenity; during which Peter went to visit the churches lately planted in those parts, by disciples whom the persecution had dispersed.

At his arrival at Lydda, he miraculously healed Eneas, who had been afflicted with the palsy, and confined to his

bed eight years; but on Peter bidding him arise, in the name of Jesus, he was immediately restored to perfect health.

The fame of this miracle was soon spread abroad, and reached Joppa, a seaport town about six miles from Lydda, and the brethren sent for Peter, on the following melancholy occasion: Tabitha, whose Greek name was Dorcas, a woman venerable for her piety and extensive charity, was newly dead, to the great loss of all mankind who loved genuine benevolence, especially the poor and afflicted, who were supported by her charity. At Peter's arrival, he found her dressed for the funeral solemnity, and surrounded by mournful widows, who showed the coats and garments wherewith she had clothed them, the monuments of her liberality.

But Peter put them all out, and, kneeling down, prayed with the utmost fervency; then turning to the body, he commanded her to arise; and taking her by the hand, presented her in perfect health to her friends and others, who were assembled to pay their last duties to so great a woman. This miracle confirmed those who had newly embraced the gospel of Jesus, and converted many more to the faith.

After which, he stayed a considerable time in Joppa, lodging in the house of one Simon, a tanner. During his abode in this city, one day when he was offering up his prayers to the Almighty, he found himself hungry, and called for meat; but while it was dressing for him, he fell into a trance, wherein was presented to him a large sheet let down from heaven, containing all sorts of creatures, clean and unclean; at the same time a voice said to him, "Arise, Peter; kill, and eat."

But this apostle, as yet tenacious of the rites and institutions of the Mosaic law, answered, that his conscience refused to comply, having never eaten any thing that was common or unclean. To which the voice replied, that it was unjust to consider that as common which God had cleansed.

By this symbolical representation, Peter was given to understand that the Almighty was now going to send him on a new embassy, which the Spirit at the same time commanded him to undertake.

While he was still wondering with himself what the event would prove, three messengers knocked at the gate, inquiring for him; and from them he received this account: that Cornelius, a Roman, captain of a band of Italian soldiers at Cæsarea, a person of great benevolence and religion, one who had been long a proselyte, had, by an immediate command of God, sent for him.

Accordingly, Peter, accompanied by some of his brethren, went to Cornelius, who had summoned together his friends and kindred; and at the apostle's entering his house, he fell at his feet, a method of address common in the eastern countries. But Peter, who considered that honor as due only to the Almighty, lifted him up, and declared to the company the reason of his coming, saying, that he had lately learned there was no respect of persons with God.

As usual, he took occasion to speak to the assembled company, of Christ, and while thus preaching to them, the Holy Ghost fell on the greatest part of his hearers, enabling them to speak several languages, and in them to magnify the great Creator of the sons of men.

At this, the Jews who accompanied Peter marveled exceedingly, to see that the gifts of the Spirit were poured upon the Gentiles; and Peter, seeing this, told the company that he knew no reason why these persons should not be baptized, as they had received the Holy Ghost as well as they; and accordingly he gave orders that they should be; and to confirm them in the holy faith they had embraced, he stayed with them some time.

This action of Peter was considered in various lights by the brethren at Jerusalem, who, being but lately converted to the Christian faith, were zealously attached to the religious ceremonies of the Mosaic institutions, and therefore most of them severely charged Peter, at his return, as being too familiar with the Gentiles. The Jews had for many ages conceived an inveterate opposition against them, considering them as persons hated by the Almighty, who had chosen their own nation as his peculiar people.

It is therefore not strange that they were highly displeased

with Peter; nor would he have been able to have defended his conduct in a satisfactory manner, had not he been charged with a peculiar commission from the Almighty, for extending the privileges of the gospel to the Gentile world.

Peter, having thus finished his visitation to the newly-planted churches, returned to Jerusalem, and was indefatigable in instructing his converts in the religion of Jesus, and preaching the glad tidings of salvation to the descendants of Jacob.

But he did not long continue in this pleasing course; for the jealous Herod Agrippa cast him into prison, with the intention of sacrificing him to the insatiate cruelty of the Jews. But the night before the intended execution, a messenger from the courts of heaven visited the gloomy horrors of the dungeon, where he found Peter asleep between his keepers.

The angel raised him up, took off his chains, ordered him to gird on his garments, and follow him.

Peter obeyed, and having passed through the first and second watch, they came to the iron gate leading to the city, which opened to them of its own accord.

The angel also accompanied him through one of the streets, and then departed from him; on which Peter came to himself, and perceived that it was no vision, but that his great and beloved Master had really sent a messenger from above, and released him from prison.

He therefore repaired to the house of Mary, where many pious persons were assembled, offering up their prayers to the throne of grace for his safety.

They were greatly surprised, and could scarcely believe it, but he assured them of his identity, and briefly told them how he was delivered, and, desiring them to inform his brethren of his being at liberty, he retired to another place.

Some time after this miraculous deliverance, a controversy arose between the Jewish and Gentile converts, with regard to the observance of the Mosaic law; one party advocating one opinion, and the other a different.

To compose this difference, it was thought necessary to

summon a general council of the apostles and brethren, to meet at Jerusalem. This was done, and the case thoroughly debated. At last Peter stood up, and declared that God having chosen him out of all the apostles to be the first preacher of the gospel among the Gentiles—God, who was best able to judge of the hearts of men, had borne witness to them that they were accepted of him, by giving them his Holy Spirit, as well as he had done the Jews, and, consequently, that there was no difference between them.

This declaration of Peter convinced the church, and it was unanimously decreed that no other burden than the strict observance of a few particular precepts, equally convenient to the Jew and Gentile, should be imposed on them.

And the decision was drawn up into a synodical epistle, and sent to the several churches, for allaying the heats and controversies this dispute had occasioned.

Soon after this council, Peter left Jerusalem, and went down to Antioch, where, using the liberty given him by the gospel, he freely ate and conversed with the Gentile proselytes, considering them now as "fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God."

Paul, being present, resolutely opposed Peter to his face, and publicly reproved him, as a person worthy to be blamed for his gross prevarication.

Some time before this contest, Peter preached the gospel in various parts of the world, enlarging the kingdom of his great Master, and spreading the glad tidings of salvation among the inhabitants of various countries; and among the rest, those of Rome, then the mistress of the world.

In that capital he is said to have continued several years, till the emperor Claudius, taking advantage of some seditious tumults raised by the Jews, published an edict, whereby they were banished from Rome, and of course Peter with them.

He returned to Jerusalem, but how long he continued in the capital of Judea is uncertain; for we have no account of his transactions for many years. This, however, is certain, that he was not idle in the service of his great Master: and Eusebius tells us, from Metaphrastes, that he visited

several of the western parts, particularly the island of Great Britain, where he continued several years, spreading the gospel in these remote places, and converting these nations to the christian faith. But, however this be, whether he was, or was not in these parts, it is certain that toward the latter end of Nero's reign, he returned to Rome, where he found the minds of the people strangely bewildered with the sorceries of Simon Magus, who, as has been observed, was chastised by Peter for his wickedness.

Foreseeing that the calumnies of Simon and his adherents would hasten his death, Peter took the greater pains, and was still more assiduous to confirm those he had been in any way instrumental in converting to the sublime truths they had received; and, in order to this, he strongly opposed that great deceiver of mankind; for in the last years of his life, he seems to have written his two epistles to the dispersed Jews in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, and Bythinia; and in an appointed encounter with Simon, discovered his magical impostures, and, through the power and assistance of the Almighty, brought him to a miserable death.

No sooner had this reached the emperor's ears, than he vowed revenge, both for the death of his favorite, and the endeavors the apostles used in turning men to the christian faith.

Accordingly he issued orders for apprehending Peter, together with his companion, Paul. The people earnestly desired Peter to escape from impending danger, and with great reluctance, it is said, he yielded to their entreaties, and made his escape by night; but as he passed the gate, he was met by a person in the form of his great and beloved Master, and on his asking him whither he was going, answered, "To Rome, to be crucified a second time;" which Peter taking for a reproof of his cowardice, returned again into the city, and was soon after apprehended, and cast, together with Paul, into the Mamertine prison. Here they were confined eight or nine months, but spent their time in the exercises of religion, especially in preaching to the prisoners and those who resorted to them; and during this confinement it is generally

thought Peter wrote the second epistle to the dispersed Jews; wherein he endeavors to confirm them in the belief and practice of christianity, and to fortify them against those poisonous and pernicious principles and actions which even then began to break in upon the christian church.

Nero, at last, returning from Achaia, entered Rome in triumph, and soon after his arrival, resolved that the apostles should fall as victims to his cruelty and revenge.

Their friends ceased not to importune heaven for their safety, but the Almighty was now willing to put an end to their sorrows, and, after sealing the truth they had preached with their own blood, to receive them into the regions of eternal bliss and happiness, and exchange their crowns of martyrdom for crowns of glory.

They were both condemned by the cruel emperor of Rome; and Peter having taken his farewell of his brethren, especially of Paul, was taken from prison, and led to the top of the Vatican Mount, near the Tiber, where he was sentenced to surrender his life upon the cross. At his coming to the place of execution, he begged the favor of the officers that he might not be crucified in the common manner, but with his head downward; affirming that he was unworthy to suffer in the same posture in which his Lord had suffered before him.

This request was complied with, and the great apostle Peter surrendered up his soul into the hands of his great and beneficent Master, who came down from heaven to ransom mankind from destruction, and open for them the gates of the heavenly Jerusalem.

His body, being taken down from the cross, is said to have been embalmed by Marcelinus, the presbyter, after the manner of the Jews, and then buried in the Vatican, near the Appian way, two miles from Rome. Here it remained till the time of Pope Cornelius, who re-conveyed it to Rome, where it rested in an obscure place until the reign of Constantine, who, for the great reverence he entertained for the christian religion, erected many churches at Rome, and rebuilt and greatly enlarged the Vatican in honor of Peter.

Thus lived and died, Simon Peter, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ, and at length to offer up his life in ratification of the doctrines he had delivered, and the faith he had maintained and propagated.

If we consider Peter as a man, there seems to have been a natural eagerness predominant in his temper, which animated his soul to the most bold and sometimes rash undertakings. It was this, in a great measure, that prompted him to be so very forward to speak, and to return answers sometimes before he well considered them.

If we consider him as a disciple of the blessed Jesus, we shall find him exemplary in the great duties of religion. His humility and lowliness of mind were remarkable.

With what a compassionate earnestness, on the conviction of a miracle, did he beg the Saviour to depart from him; thinking it unworthy the Son of God to come near so vile a sinner!

When Jesus, by that amazing condescension, stooped so low as to wash his disciples' feet, Peter could not be persuaded to admit his performing it, thinking it highly improper that so great a person should submit to such a servile office toward a person so mean as himself; nor could he be induced to admit of it, till his Master threatened to deprive him of his favor.

If we consider him, too, as an apostle, as pastor, or shepherd of the souls of men, we shall find him faithful and diligent in his office, zealously endeavoring to instruct the ignorant, reduce the erroneous, strengthen the weak, confirm the strong, reclaim the vicious, and turn the children of men into the ways of righteousness.

With what unconquerable patience did he endure the greatest trials, surmount every difficulty, and remove every opposition, that he might plant the gospel of his beloved Master,—never refusing to lay down his life to promote it!

Nor was he only assiduous in performing these duties himself, but sought by every possible means to induce others to similar faithfulness. And because it was impossible to be always present, he endeavored by letters to imprint on their

minds the practice of what had been taught; a method he tells us he was resolved to pursue as long as he continued an inhabitant of this world, that so they might be able, after his decease, to have them always in remembrance.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Paul.

EARLY HISTORY OF PAUL; CONVERSION TO THE CHRISTIAN FAITH; LABORS IN THE GOOD CAUSE IMMEDIATELY AFTER HIS CONVERSION; COUNCIL HELD AT JERUSALEM.

THIS great apostle of the Gentiles was a native of Tarsus, and a descendant from the ancient stock of Abraham. He was born about two years before the blessed Jesus, and belonged to the tribe of Benjamin, the youngest son of Jacob, who thus prophesied of him: "Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf; in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil."

A prophetical character, which Tertullian and others will have to be accomplished in this apostle.

For, in his youth, or morning of his days, he persecuted the churches, destroying the flock of the Almighty; he devoured the prey. In his declining age, or evening of his days, he became a physician of the nations, feeding and distributing, with the greatest care and assiduity, the sheep of Christ, that great Shepherd of Israel: he divided the spoil.

Tarsus was a place invested with the privileges of Rome, and Paul therefore was born a Roman citizen, and he often pleads this privilege on his trials.

It was common for the inhabitants of Tarsus, to send their children into other cities for learning and improvement, especially to Jerusalem, where they were so numerous that they had a synagogue of their own, called the Synagogue of the Cilicians. To this capital Paul was sent, and brought up

at the feet of that eminent Rabbi, Gamaliel, in the most exact knowledge of the law of Moses.

Nor did he fail to profit by the instructions of that great master; for he so diligently conformed himself to its precepts, that, without boasting, he asserts of himself that, touching the righteousness of the law, he was blameless, and defied even his enemies to alledge any thing to the contrary, even in his youth. He joined himself to the sect of the Pharisees, the most strict order of the Jewish religion; but at the same time the proudest, and the greatest enemies to Christ and his holy religion.

With regard to his double capacity of Jewish extraction and Roman freedom, he had two names, Saul and Paul—the former Hebrew, and the latter Latin.

It was common for the descendants of Benjamin, to give the name Saul to their children ever since the time of the first king of Israel, who was chosen out of that tribe; and Paul was a name as common among the Romans.

We must also consider his trade of tent-making as a part of his education, it being the constant practice of the Jews to bring up their children to some honest calling, that in case of necessity they might provide for themselves by the labor of their own hands.

Saul having obtained a thorough knowledge of the sciences cultivated by the Jews, and being naturally of a very hot and fiery temper, became a great champion of the law of Moses, and the traditions of the elders, which he considered as zeal for God. This rendered him impatient of all opposition to the doctrine and tenets he had imbibed, and a vehement persecutor of the christians, who were commonly reputed the enemies and destroyers of the Jewish economy.

We must not, however, consider this apostle as guilty of the pride and hypocrisy of the Pharisees; for he declares that he had ever been careful to act in conformity to the dictates of his conscience, by which he thought himself bound to do "many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth."

It was therefore the prejudices of his education, and the

natural warmth of his temper, that excited him to those violent persecutions of the christians for which he became so famous.

The first action we find him engaged in was the disputation he and his countrymen had with the Martyr Stephen, with regard to the Messiah.

The christian was too hard for them in the dispute; but they were too powerful for him in their civil interests; for being enraged at his convincing arguments, they carried him before the high priest, who by false accusations condemned him to death.

How far Saul was concerned in this cruel action, it is impossible for us to say; all we know is, that he kept the raiment of them that slew him.

The storm of persecution against the church being thus begun, it increased prodigiously, and the poor christians at Jerusalem, were miserably harassed and dispersed. In this persecution our apostle was a principal agent, searching all the adjacent parts for the afflicted saints, beating some in the synagogue, inflicting other cruelties, confining some in prison, and procuring others to be put to death.

Nor could Jerusalem and the adjacent parts confine his fiery zeal; he applied to the Sanhedrim, and procured a commission from that court to extend his persecution to Damascus. How infernally insatiable is the fury of a misguided zeal! how restless and unwearied in its designs of cruelty! It had already sufficiently harassed the poor christians at Jerusalem; but not content with this, it persecuted them even to strange cities, even to Damascus itself, whither many of them had fled for shelter, resolving to bring them back to Jerusalem, in order to their punishment and execution.

Saul was sent to apprehend what christians he could find, but it was the will of Providence that he should be employed in a work of a very different nature, and accordingly he was stopped in his journey; for as he was traveling between Jerusalem and Damascus to execute the commission of the Jewish Sanhedrim, a refulgent light, far exceeding the brightness of the sun, darted upon him, at which both he and

his companions were terribly amazed and confounded, and immediately fell prostrate on the ground.

While they lay in this state, a voice was heard in the Hebrew language, saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" To which Saul replied, "Who art thou, Lord?" And was immediately answered, "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest. It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks."

As if Jesus had said, "All thy attempts to extirpate the faith in me will prove abortive, and, like kicking against the spikes, wound and torment thyself."

Saul was sufficiently convinced of his folly in acting against Jesus, whom he was now assured to be the Messiah, and asked "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"—when the Lord replied, "Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do."

The apostle now arose from the earth, but found himself deprived of sight, the resplendent brightness of the vision being too intense for mortal eyes to behold. His companions, therefore, led him by the hand to the city of Damascus, where he entered the house of Judas, and remained there three days without sight, nor did he either eat or drink, but spent his time in prayer to the Almighty, beseeching him to pardon the sins of his ignorance and blinded zeal.

In the meantime the Saviour commissioned one Ananias, a devout man, to go unto Saul, to restore his sight, and proclaim unto him the will of God.

This was no sooner pronounced than there fell down from his eyes thick films resembling scales, and he received his sight; and after baptism conversed freely with the christians of Damascus. Nor did he only converse with them; he also, to the great astonishment of the whole church, preached the gospel to those christians he came with an intention to destroy, at the same time boldly asserting that "Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God;" and proving it to the Jews, with such demonstrative evidence, that they were confounded, and were utterly unable to answer him.

At the instance of the Divine command, this miraculous convert retired into Arabia Petræa, where he received a full

revelation of all the mysteries of christianity; for he himself declares that he conferred not with flesh and blood.

Having preached in several parts of the country for some time, he returned again to Damascus, applying himself with the utmost assiduity to the great work of the ministry, frequenting the synagogues there, powerfully confuting the objections commonly made by the descendants of Jacob against Jesus of Nazareth, and converting great numbers of Jews and Gentiles.

He was, indeed, remarkably zealous in his preaching, and blessed with a very extraordinary method of reasoning, whereby he proved the essential doctrines of christianity beyond exception. This irritated the Jews to the highest degree; and at length, after two or three years' continuance in those parts, they found means to prevail on the governor of Damascus to have him put to death. But they knew it would be difficult to take him, as he had so many friends in the city; they therefore kept themselves in a continual watch, searched all the houses where they supposed he might conceal himself, and also obtained a guard from the governor to observe the gates, in order to prevent his escaping from them. In this distress, his christian friends were far from deserting him; they tried every method that offered to procure his escape; but finding it impossible for him to pass through either of the gates of the city, they let him down from one of their houses through a window in a basket over the wall, by which means the cruel designs of his enemies were rendered abortive.

Having thus escaped from his malicious persecutors, he repaired to Jerusalem, and on his arrival addressed himself to the church. But they, knowing well the former temper and principles of this great persecutor, shunned his company, till Barnabas brought him to Peter, who was not yet cast into prison, and to James, bishop of Jerusalem, informing them of his miraculous conversion, and that he had preached the gospel with the greatest boldness in the synagogue of Damascus; upon which they gladly received him, and familiarly entertained him fifteen days.

During this interval, he was remarkably assiduous in preaching the gospel of the Son of God, and in confuting the Jews with the greatest courage and resolution. But snares were soon laid for him, as malice can as easily cease to be, as to remain inactive; and being warned by God in a vision that his testimony would not be received at Jerusalem, he thought proper to depart, and preach the gospel to the Gentiles.

Accordingly, being conducted by the brethren to Cesarea Philippi, he set sail for Tarsus, his native city, from whence he was soon after brought by Barnabas to Antioch, to assist him in propagating christianity in that city. In this employment he spent one whole year, and had the satisfaction of seeing the gospel flourish in a remarkable manner.

About this time a terrible famine, foretold by Agabus, happened in several parts of the Roman empire, particularly in Judea, which induced the christians at Antioch to compassionate the miseries of their brethren at Jerusalem. They accordingly raised considerable contributions for their relief, which they sent to the capital of Judea, by the hands of Barnabas and Saul, who, immediately after executing their commission, returned to Antioch.

But while they were performing the public exercises of religion, it was revealed to them by the Holy Ghost that they should set apart Barnabas and Saul to preach the gospel in other places; which was accordingly done, and they were immediately deputed for that service by prayer, fasting, and the imposition of hands.

The first place they visited was Selucia, where they did not continue long, but sailed for Cyprus, where they met with remarkable success, after which, Paul repaired to Phrygia in Pamphylia, and, taking Titus with him in the room of Mark, who was gone to Jerusalem, traveled to Antioch, the metropolis of Pisidia. Soon after their arrival, they entered the synagogue of the Jews on the Sabbath day, and after the reading of the law, Paul, being invited by the rulers, spoke to the people of God's doings with his people Israel; the prophecies concerning Christ, and the way of salvation through him.

This spirited address of the great apostle carried with it its own weight, and obtained from the converted Gentiles a request that it should again be delivered the ensuing Sabbath; when almost the whole city flocked to hear the apostle; at which the Jews were filled with envy, and contradicted Paul, uttering many blasphemous expressions against Jesus of Nazareth. But their opposition could not daunt the apostles, who boldly declared their Divine commission to preach the gospel, first to the Jews, but as they so obstinately rejected it, they were now to address themselves to the Gentiles; who, hearing this, rejoiced exceedingly, magnifying the words of the Almighty, and many of them embraced the doctrines of the gospel. This increased the malice and fury of the Jews, who, by false and artful insinuations, prevailed on some of the more bigoted and honorable women to bring over their husbands to their party, by which means Paul and Barnabas were driven out of the city.

At which the apostles departed, shaking off the dust of their feet, as a testimony of the sense they had of the ingratitude and infidelity of the Jews.

From Antioch they went to Iconium, the metropolis of Lycaonia, a province of the Lesser Asia, where they again entered into the synagogue of the Jews, notwithstanding the ill-treatment they had met with from them in other places; for so great was their zeal for the gospel, that they were not to be deterred from preaching it by ill-usage, however violent.

Their success encouraged them to continue a considerable time in this city, to instruct the converts, and confirm their faith by miracles. But Jewish malice and envy were soon stirred up against them with evil design; and the apostles having timely notice of it, fled from the city, and traveled to Lystra, where they preached the gospel to the inhabitants, and those who dwelt in the adjacent country.

Among the converts at Lystra, was a man who had been lame from his mother's womb, and had never walked. Paul, perceiving that he had faith to be saved, thought proper to add the cure of his body to that of his soul, knowing that it

would not only be beneficial to him, but to all the rest of the believers, by confirming their faith; and, that the miracle might be wrought in the most conspicuous manner, he, in the midst of the congregation, said, in an audible voice to the man, "Stand upright on thy feet;" and the words were no sooner pronounced than his strength was at once restored, and he leaped up and walked.

The people who beheld this miracle well knew that it was not wrought by any human power; but having been initiated into the superstitious customs of the heathen, they cried out, "The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men." Accordingly they called Barnabas, Jupiter, because of his venerable gravity, and Paul, Mercury, from his eloquence. Nor was it long before the whole city resounded with acclamations; so that almost all the inhabitants gathered themselves together, and, preceded by the priest of Jupiter, and oxen dressed in garlands, they came to the house where the apostles were, intending to do sacrifice unto them. But as soon as the apostles understood their design, they were greatly afflicted at this idolatrous design, and, rending their clothes, to express their grief and abhorrence of the action, ran to them, crying out, "Ye men of Lystra, ye are mistaken in the object of your worship; for though we have done many miracles in the name and by the power of Christ, yet we are no more than men, and subject to the same passions with yourselves, and preach unto you the glad tidings of salvation, that ye may forsake the vanities of this world, and turn to the living God, who created the heaven and the earth, the sea, and all the creatures they contain.

This argument of the apostles' had the desired effect; and the people were at last, though with difficulty, persuaded to lay aside their intended idolatrous sacrifice.

The apostles indefatigably persevered in the execution of their important commission, declaring wherever they went the glad tidings of salvation, through repentance unto life, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

But the malice of the Jews still pursued them; for some of these bigoted Israelites, coming from Antioch and Iconium,

exasperated and stirred up the multitude, so that those very persons who could hardly be restrained from offering sacrifice to them, now used them like slaves, stoning them in so cruel a manner that Paul was thought to be dead, and as such they dragged him out of the city; but while the christians of Lystra were attending on his body, probably in order to carry him to the grave, he arose, and returned with them into the city; and the next day departed with Barnabas to Derbe, where they preached the gospel and converted many—no danger being able to terrify them from the work of the ministry.

Having visited several places, and finished the circuit of their ministry, they returned back to Antioch in Syria, from whence they at first departed. Here they summoned the church, and gave them an account of their ministry, the success it had met with in these different parts, and how great a door had thus been opened for the conversion of the Gentile world.

While Paul continued at Antioch, that famous controversy, with regard to the observation of the Jewish ceremonies under the Christian dispensation, was set on foot by certain Jewish converts, to the great disturbance of the whole church. And it was determined to send Paul and Barnabas to consult with the apostles and church at Jerusalem, that this affair might be settled on the most solid foundation. On their arrival, they first addressed themselves to Peter, James and John, the pillars of that church, by whom they were kindly entertained, and admitted to the right hand of fellowship. Perceiving by the account given them by Paul, that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed to him, as that of the circumcision was to Peter, they agreed that Peter should preach to the Jews, and Paul to the Gentiles.

This being determined, a council was summoned, wherein Peter declared his opinion, and Paul and Barnabas acquainted them with the great things God, by their ministry, had done among the Gentiles—a plain evidence that they were accepted by the Almighty, though uncircumcised, as well as the Jews, with all their legal rights and privileges.

CHAPTER XXVII.

PREACHING AT ATHENS; SUCCESS OF MINISTRY AT CORINTH AND EPHESUS; DEPARTURE FROM EPHESUS AFTER THREE YEARS' RESIDENCE; ARRAIGNED BEFORE FELIX; CONFINED IN THE JUDGMENT HALL.

THE controversy concerning the observation of Jewish ceremonies in the christian church being decided in favor of Paul, he and his companions returned back to Antioch; and soon after, Peter himself came down.

On reading the decretal epistle in the church, the converts conversed freely and inoffensively with the Gentiles, till some of the Jews coming thither from Jerusalem, Peter withdrew his conversation, as if it had been a thing unwarrantable and unlawful. By such a strange method of proceeding, the minds of many were dissatisfied, and their consciences very uneasy. Paul with the greatest concern observed it, and publicly rebuked Peter, with that sharpness and severity his unwarrantable practice deserved.

Soon after this dispute, Paul and Barnabas resolved to visit the churches they had planted among the Gentiles, and Barnabas was desirous of taking with them his cousin Mark; but this Paul strenuously opposed, as he had left them in their former journey. This trifling dispute arose to such a height, that these two great apostles and fellow-laborers in the gospel parted.

Barnabas, taking Mark with him, repaired to Cyprus, his native country: and Paul, having made choice of Silas, and recommended the success of his undertaking to the care of Divine Providence, set forward on his intended journey.

They first visited the churches of Syria and Cilicia, confirming them in the faith by their instructions and exhortations. Hence they sailed to Crete, where Paul preached the gospel, and constituted Titus as the first bishop and pastor of the island, leaving him to settle those affairs of the church

which time would not permit the apostle to settle himself From this place they returned back into Cilicia, and came to Lystra, where they found Timothy, whose father was a Greek, but his mother a Jewish convert, and by her he had been brought up under all the advantages of a pious and religious education, especially with regard to the holy Scriptures, which he had studied with the greatest assiduity and success.

This person Paul designed for the companion of his trav els, and a special instrument in the ministry of the gospel. But knowing that his being uncircumcised would prove a stumbling block to the Jews, he caused him to be circumcised; being willing, in lawful and indifferent matters, to conform himself to the tempers and apprehensions of men, in order to save their souls.

In this instance the apostle evinced much prudence, well knowing that inveterate prejudices in religious matters are not easily overcome; for which reason he is said to become all things to all men.

Every thing being ready for their journey, Paul and his companions departed from Lystra, passing through Phrygia, and the country of Galatia, where the apostle was entertained with the greatest kindness and veneration, the people looking upon him as an angel sent immediately from heaven; and being by revelation forbidden to go into Asia, he was commanded by a second vision to repair to Macedonia to preach the gospel. Accordingly, our apostle prepared to pass from Asia into Europe. Here Luke joined them, and became ever after the inseparable companion of Paul, who, being desirous of finding the speediest passage into Macedonia, took ship with his companions—Silas, Luke, and Timothy—and came to Samothracia, an island in the Egean sea, not far from Thrace; and the next day he went to Neapolis, a port of Macedonia. Leaving this place, he repaired to Philippi, the metropolis of that part of Macedonia, and a Roman colony, where they staid some days.

In this city, Paul, according to his constant practice, preached in a proseucha, or oratory of the Jews, which stood by the river's side, at some distance from the city, and was

much frequented by the devout women of their religion, who met there to pray and hear the law.

To these Paul preached the glad tidings of the gospel; and by the influence of the Holy Spirit converted many, especially a certain woman, named Lydia, a Jewish proselyte, a seller of purple, but a native of Thyatira.

This woman, being baptized, with her whole family, was so importunate with Paul and his companions to abide at her house, that they were constrained to accept of her invitation. During the time of the apostles' residing in this city, they continued their daily course of worshiping at the same oratory; and after several days, as they were repairing to the same place of devotion, there met them a damsel who was possessed of a spirit of divination, by whom her masters acquired very much advantage.

This woman followed Paul and his companions, crying out, "These men are the servants of the Most High God, which show unto us the way of salvation."

Paul at first took no notice of her, not being willing to multiply miracles without necessity. But when he saw her following them several days together, he began to be troubled, and, in imitation of his great Master, who would not suffer the devil to acknowledge him, lest his false and lying tongue should prejudice the truth in the minds of men, commanded the spirit, in the name of Jesus, to come out of her. The evil spirit with reluctance obeyed, and left the damsel that very instant. This miraculous cure proving a great loss to her masters, who acquired large gains from her soothsaying, they were filled with envy and malice against the apostles, and by their instigation the multitude arose, and, seizing upon Paul and his companion, hurried them before the magistrates and governors of the colony, accusing them of introducing many innovations which were prejudicial to the state, and unlawful for them to comply with, as being Romans.

The magistrates, being concerned for the tranquillity of the state, and jealous of all disturbances, were very forward to punish the offenders, against whom great numbers of the multitude testified, and therefore commanded the officers to

strip them, and scourge them severely as seditious persons. This was accordingly executed; after which, the apostles were committed to close custody, the jailer receiving more than ordinary charge to keep them safely; and he accordingly thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.

But the most obscure dungeon, or the pitchy mantle of the night, can not intercept the beams of divine joy and comfort from the souls of pious men.

Their minds were all serenity; and at midnight they prayed and sung praises so loud, that they were heard in every part of the prison.

Nor were their prayers offered to the throne of grace in vain; an earthquake shook the foundations of the prison, opened the doors, loosed the chains, and set the prisoners at liberty.

This convulsion of nature roused the jailer from sleep; who, concluding from what he saw that all his prisoners were escaped, was going to put a period to his life; but Paul observing him, hastily cried out, "Do thyself no harm, for we are all here."

The keeper was now as greatly surprised at the goodness of the apostles, as he was before terrified at the thought of their escape; and, calling for a light, he came immediately into the presence of the apostles, fell down at their feet, took them from the dungeon, brought them to his own house, washed their stripes, and begged them to instruct him in the knowledge of that God who was so mighty to save.

Paul readily granted his request, and replied that, if he believed in Jesus Christ, he might be saved, with his whole house. Accordingly, the jailer, with all his family, were, after competent instruction, baptized, and received as members of the church of Christ.

As soon as it was day, the magistrates, either hearing what had happened, or reflecting on what they had done as too harsh and unjustifiable, sent their serjeant to the jailer, with orders to discharge the apostles.

The jailer joyfully delivered his message, and bade them

depart in peace;" but Paul, that he might make the magistrates sensible what injury they had done to them, and how unjustly they had punished them, without examination or trial, sent them word, that as they thought proper to scourge and imprison Romans, contrary to the laws of the empire, he expected they should come themselves, and make them some satisfaction.

Reluctant to do this, the magistrates very submissively entreated the apostles to depart without any further disturbance. This small recompense for the cruel usage they had received, was accepted by the meek followers of the blessed Jesus; they left the prison, and retired to the house of Lydia, where they comforted their brethren with an account of their deliverance, and departed, having laid the foundation of a very eminent church, as it appears from Paul's Epistle to the Philippians.

Leaving Philippi, Paul and his companions continued their journey toward the west, till they came to Thessalonica, the metropolis of Macedonia, about a hundred and twenty miles from Philippi. On their arrival at this place, Paul, according to his custom, went into the synagogue of the Jews, and preached unto his countrymen,—the ungrateful usage he had met with in other places not discouraging him from persevering in so glorious a work. His doctrine, however, was strenuously opposed by the Jews, who would not allow Jesus to be the Messiah, because of his ignominous death.

During the stay of the apostles at Thessalonica, they lodged in the house of a certain christian named Jason, who entertained them very courteously. But the Jews would not suffer the apostles to continue at rest. They beset the house of Jason, intending to take Paul, and deliver him up to an incensed multitude, but in this they were disappointed, the christians having concealed him in some other part of the city.

As soon as the tumult was over, the Thessalonians who had been converted by them sent Paul and Silas by night to Berea, a city about fifty miles south of Thessalonica, but out of the power of their enemies. Here also Paul's great love

for his countrymen, the Jews, and his earnest desire of their salvation, excited him to preach to them in particular; accordingly he entered into their synagogue, and explained the gospel unto them, proving, out of the Scriptures of the Old Testament, the truth of the doctrines he advanced.

His preaching was attended with remarkable success, and as it reached Thessalonica, it greatly incensed the inveterate enemies of the gospel there, who accordingly repaired to Berea, and raised tumults against the apostles; so that Paul, in order to avoid their fury, was forced to leave the town; but Silas and Timothy, either less known or less envied, continued still there.

Paul, leaving Berea under the conduct of certain guides, it was said he designed to retire by sea out of Greece, that his restless enemies might cease their persecution; but the guides, according to Paul's order, brought him to Athens, and left him there, after receiving from him an order for Silas and Timothy to repair to him as soon as possible.

While Paul continued at Athens, expecting the arrival of his companions, he walked up and down, to take a more accurate survey of the city, which he found miserably overrun with superstition and idolatry.

The spirit of the apostle was grieved, and he exerted all his strength for their conversion, improving every opportunity of speaking to them of Christ and his salvation.

They did not persecute him, as others had done, but his preaching was considered by the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers as a fabulous legend, and by the more sober part as a discovery of some new gods, which they had not yet placed in their temples. And though they were not unwilling to receive any new deities, yet, as the Areopagus, the supreme court of the city, was to judge of all gods to whom public worship might be allowed, they brought him before those judges, to give an account of his doctrine.

Paul, being placed before the judges of this high assembly, readily gave them an account of his doctrine, in a grave and elegant speech; wherein he exalted Christ as God over all, and his death the means of salvation to a guilty world.

VIEW OF THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST MARY, AT IONA

Thus boldly did this intrepid servant and soldier of Jesus Christ assert the cause of his Divine Master, among the great, the wise, and the learned, and reason with great persuasion and eloquence on the nature of God, and the manner in which he has commanded his creatures to worship him, even in spirit and in truth.

During Paul's stay at Athens, Timothy, according to the order he had received, came to him out of Macedonia, and brought an account that the christians of Thessalonica were under persecution from their fellow citizens ever since his departure; at which Paul was greatly concerned, and at first inclined to visit them in person, to confirm them in the faith they had embraced; but being hindered by the enemies of the gospel, he sent Timothy to comfort them, and put them in mind of what they had at first heard,—namely, that persecution would be the constant attendant on their profession.

On Timothy's departure, Paul left Athens, and traveled to Corinth, a very populous place, and famous for its trade. Here he found Aquila, and Priscilla his wife, lately come from Italy, having been banished from Rome by the decree of Claudius; and they being of the same trade he himself had learned in his youth, he wrought with them, that he might not be burdensome to the new converts.

After some stay in Corinth, the apostle was joined by Silas and Timothy, and disputed frequently in the synagogue, reasoning and proving that Jesus was the true Messiah.

This greatly exasperated the Jews, and Paul, willing to testify his resentment, shook his garments, and told them, since they were determined to pull down the vengeance of Heaven upon their own heads, he was absolutely guiltless and innocent, and would henceforth address himself to the Gentiles. Accordingly he left them, and repaired to the house of Justus, a religious proselyte, where, by his preaching and miracles, he converted great numbers to the faith, among which were Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, Gaius, and Stephanas, who with their families were baptized, and admitted members of the christian church.

But lest the ungrateful, yea, cruel behavior of unbelievers should discourage this able minister from prosecuting the glorious work of the conversion of sinners, Jesus appeared to him in a vision, and told him that, notwithstanding the bad success he had hitherto met with, there was a large harvest to be gathered in that place; that he should not be afraid of his enemies, but preach the gospel boldly and securely, for that he himself would protect and preserve him.

About this time he seems to have written his first Epistle to the Thessalonians, the principal design of which is to confirm them in the belief of the christian religion, and to excite them to persevere in it, notwithstanding all the malice of their enemies, and the persecutions they must expect to suffer, and to instruct them in the duties of a religious life.

During his stay at Corinth, he wrote his second epistle to the same people, wherein he again endeavored to confirm them in the most holy faith.

On leaving the church at Corinth, he took ship at Cenchrea, the port of Corinth, for Syria, taking with him Aquila and Priscilla, and on his arrival at Ephesus, he preached a while in the synagogue of the Jews, promising to return to them, after keeping the passover at Jerusalem.

Accordingly, he again took ship, and landed at Cæsarea, and from thence traveled to Jerusalem, where he kept the feast, visited the church, and then repaired to Antioch.

Here Paul staid some time, and then traversed the countries of Galatia and Phrygia, confirming the newly converted christians, till he came to Ephesus.

At this latter place he fixed his abode for three years, having with him Gaius of Derbe, Aristarchus, a native of Thessalonica, Timotheus, and Erastus of Corinth, and Titus. The first thing he did after his arrival was to examine certain disciples, "whether they had received the Holy Ghost since they believed."

Finding them trusting in the outward form of John's baptism, he instructed them, and they were baptized according to the form prescribed by Christ himself,—that is, in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and

after the apostle had prayed, and laid his hands over them, they received the gifts of tongues, and other miraculous powers.

After this he entered into the Jewish synagogue, where, for the first three months, he contended and disputed with the Jews, endeavoring with great earnestness and resolution to convince them of the truth of the christian religion.

But when, instead of success, he met with nothing but obstinacy and infidelity, he left the place altogether, and taught those who resorted to him in the school of one Tyrannus, a place where scholars used to be instructed.

In this manner he continued to preach the gospel two whole years, by which means the Jews and proselytes had an opportunity of hearing the glad tidings of salvation.

And because miracles are the clearest evidence of a divine commission, the Almighty was pleased to testify to the doctrine which Paul delivered, by amazing and miraculous operations, many of which were of a peculiar and extraordinary nature; for he not only healed those that came to him, but if napkins and handkerchiefs were only touched by him, and applied to the sick, their diseases immediately vanished, and the evil spirits departed out of those that were possessed with them.

During Paul's stay at Ephesus, an accident happened which was attended with great trouble and danger.

In this city was the celebrated temple of Diana, a structure so magnificent for beauty, riches, and magnitude, that it was reckoned one of the seven wonders of the world. But what increased its reputation and fame, was an image of Diana kept there, which the idolatrous priests persuaded the people was made by Jupiter himself, and dropped down from heaven; for which reason it was held in great veneration, not only at Ephesus, but throughout all Asia.

The people plainly perceiving that Paul's preaching tended to the subversion of idolatry, called together a council, to see what should be done for the safety of their institutions. It was agreed to silence the preacher, and accordingly they determined to expose him to the savage beasts of the theatre,

but the Lord interposed by a miraculous deliverance for his servant, and thus brought to naught the counsels of the wicked.

About this time Paul was informed of some disturbances in the church at Corinth, fomented by a company of false teachers crept in among them, who endeavored to draw them into parties and factions, by persuading one company to be for Peter, another for Paul, and a third for Apollos; as if the principal part of religion consisted in being of this or that denomination, or in a warm, active zeal, to depreciate and oppose whoever is not of our own narrow sect.

To cure these dissensions, Paul wrote his first epistle to the Corinthians; wherein he smartly reproves them for their schisms and parties, conjures them to peace and unity, corrects those gross corruptions that had been introduced among them, and particularly resolves those many cases and controversies wherein they had requested his advice and counsel.

Soon after the tumult at Ephesus, he called the christians together, and took his leave of them with the most tender expressions of love and affection. He had now spent almost three years at Ephesus, and founded there a very considerable church, of which he had ordained Timothy the first bishop.

He first traveled about two hundred miles northward to Troas, before he first took ship, expecting to meet Titus there; but missing him, he proceeded on his voyage to Macedonia. On his arrival there, he preached the gospel in several places, even as far as Allyricum, now called Sclavonia. During this journey, he met with many troubles and dangers, "without were fightings, and within fears;" but God, who comforteth those who are cast down, revived his spirits by the arrival of Titus, who gave him a pleasing account of the good effects his epistle had produced at Corinth.

During the stay of Titus in Macedonia, Paul wrote his second epistle to the Corinthians, and sent it to them by Titus and Luke.

About this time also he wrote his first epistle to Timothy, whom he had left at Ephesus, wherein he gives him large

directions how to conduct himself in the discharge of that great office and authority in the church committed to his care.

During his stay in Greece, he went to Corinth, where he wrote his famous epistle to the Romans, which he sent by Phebe, a deaconess of the church of Cenchrea, near Corinth.

Being now determined to return into Syria, in order to convey contributions to the brethren at Jerusalem, he set out on his journey; but, being informed that the Jews had formed a design of killing and robbing him by the way, he returned back into Macedonia, and came to Philippi, from whence he went to Troas, where he staid seven days. Here he preached to them on the Lord's day, and continued his discourse till midnight, being himself to depart in the morning.

The length of his discourse, and time of the night, caused some of the audience to be overtaken with sleep, and among them a young man, named Eutychus, who fell from the third story, and was taken up dead; but the apostle, by his prayers to the throne of grace, presently restored him to life and health.

How indefatigable was the industry of this great apostle! how closely did he tread in the steps of his great Master, who went about doing good. He preached and wrought miracles wherever he came!

As a master-builder, he either laid a foundation, or raised the superstructure! He was "instant in season and out of season," and spared no pains to assist the souls of men.

The night being thus spent in holy exercises, Paul took his leave of the brethren in the morning, traveling on foot to Assos, a seaport town, whither he had before sent his companions by sea.

Having visited several places, they came to Miletus, not putting in at Ephesus, because the apostle was resolved, if possible, to be at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost.

On his arrival, however, he sent to Ephesus, to summon the elders of the church; and on their coming, reminded them of the manner in which he had conversed among them· how faithfully and affectionately he had discharged the office

of his ministry, and how incessantly he had labored for the good of the souls of men; adding that now he was going up to Jerusalem, where he was ignorant of what might befall him, except what had been foretold him by those who were endued with the prophetical gifts of the Holy Ghost,—namely, that afflictions and imprisonments would attend him; but this gave him no concern, being willing to lay down his life whenever the gospel required, and fully determined to serve faithfully his great Lord and Master.

"I well know," continued he, "that you will see my face no more; but for my encouragement and satisfaction, ye yourselves can bear me witness that I have not, by concealing any part of the christian doctrine, betrayed your souls."

Paul, having finished his discourse, kneeled down, and joined with them in prayer; when they all melted into tears, and, with the greatest expressions of sorrow, attended him to the ship, grieving in the most passionate manner, for what he had told them, that "they should see his face no more."

From Miletus they went to Coos, from whence they sailed the next day to Rhodes, two islands in the Egean sea. Leaving this place, they came to Patara, the metropolis of Lycia, where they went on board another vessel, bound for Tyre in Phenicia. On his arrival, Paul visited the brethren there, and continued with them a week, and was advised by some of them, who had the gift of prophecy, not to go up to Jerusalem. But the apostle would by no means abandon his design, or refuse to suffer any thing, provided he might spread the gospel of his Saviour. Finding all persuasions were in vain, they all accompanied him to the shore, where he kneeled down and prayed with them; and after embracing them with the utmost affection, he went on board, and came to Ptolemais, and the next day to Cæsarea.

During their stay in this place, Agabus, a christian prophet, came thither from Judea, who, taking Paul's girdle, bound his own hands and feet with it; signifying by this external symbol, that the Jews would bind Paul in that manner, and deliver him over to the Gentiles.

Whereupon, both his own companions, and the christians

of Cæsarea, earnestly besought him that he would not go up to Jerusalem. But the apostle asked them if they intended by these passionate dissuasives to add more affliction to his sorrow. "For I am ready," continued he, "not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus."

When the disciples found that his resolution was not to be shaken, they importuned him no further, leaving the event to be determined according to the pleasure of the Most High. And all things being ready, Paul and his companions set forward on their journey, and were kindly and joyfully received by the christians, on their arrival at Jerusalem.

The day after their arrival, they went to the house of James the apostle, where the rest of the bishops and governors of the church were met together. After mutual salutations, the apostle gave them a particular account of the success with which God had blessed his endeavors in propagating christianity among the Gentiles; for which they all joined in thanksgiving to God. Soon after he repaired to the temple, and rehearsed the dealings of God with him from the happy hour of his conversion, up to the time when he stood before them; and as he alluded to his Divine commission to preach the truth to the Gentiles, the Jews became indignant, and cried with one voice, "Away with such a fellow from the earth."

But the captain of the guard commanded him to be brought within the castle, and that he should be examined and scourged, till he confessed the reason of the uncommon rage shown against him by the people. Accordingly, the lictor bound him, and was going to put the orders he had received into execution, when Paul asked the centurion that stood by whether it was lawful to scourge a citizen of Rome, before any sentence had been passed upon him.

The centurion, instead of answering him, repaired immediately to the governor, and desired him take care how he proceeded against the prisoner, because he was a Roman.

On this information, the governor came into the prison, and asked Paul whether he was really a free citizen of Rome,

and being told he was, he answered that he himself procured that great privilege by a large sum of money; but Paul answered, "I was free born."

On receiving this account, the governor commanded the centurion not to scourge him, being terrified at what he had already done—namely, his chaining a free denizen of Rome.

The next day he ordered his chains to be taken off; and that he might thoroughly satisfy himself of the cause of so unusual a tumult on the day preceding, summoned the Sanhedrim to meet, and brought down Paul before them.

The apostle being thus placed before the great council of the Jews, freely spoke his sentiments, thereby throwing the whole court into confusion, by exciting the regard of the Pharisees, who favored the doctrine of the resurrection, and incurring the resentment of the Sadducees, who strenuously opposed it. The dissensions of these sects increased to that degree, that the captain feared Paul would have been pulled in pieces; and therefore took him from the bar, and carried him back to the castle.

But during the silence of the night he was comforted by extraordinary communications of the Divine Spirit, encouraging him to constancy and resolution, and assuring him that he should, notwithstanding all the malice and wicked designs of his enemies, live to bear his testimony, even in Rome itself.

The next morning the Jews, whose envy and malice were increased by these dilatory proceedings, determined to use a quicker method of putting a period to his life. In order to this, above forty of the most turbulent entered into a shocking confederacy to kill him; ratifying it by oaths, and the most bitter execrations, that they would neither eat or drink until they had put their inhuman design into execution.

This design, though probably concluded under the mantle of the night, was discovered to Paul, by his sister's son, and at the request of the apostle, told to the governor himself, who immediately commanded two parties of horse and foot to be ready by nine o'clock that night, in order to conduct Paul to Felix, the Roman governor of that province; to

whom also he sent an account of the whole proceedings of the Jews against the prisoner, and at the same time ordered his accusers also to appear before the Roman magistrate.

Accordingly Paul was conducted to Antipatris, and afterward to Cæsarea, where, the letters being delivered to Felix, the apostle was also presented to him; and finding that he belonged to the province of Cilicia, he told him that as soon as his accusers were come down, he would determine the affair; and in the mean time commanded him to be secured in the place called Herod's judgment-hall.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

TRIAL BEFORE FELIX; APPEALS TO CÆSAR; ARRIVAL AT ROME; DWELLS IN PEACE AT THAT CITY; HIS MARTYRDOM; OBSERVATIONS UPON HIS CHARACTER.

BOUT five days after this, Ananias, the high priest, with others of the Sanhedrim, came down to Cæsarea, and brought with them an advocate named Tertullus, who, in a speech set off with all the insinuating arts of eloquence, to prepossess the governor in their favor, accused Paul of being a seditious person and a disturber of the public peace; who had set himself at the head of the Nazarenes, and made no scruple of profaning even the temple itself.

The orator having finished his charge against the apostle, Felix told Paul that he was at liberty to make his defense; which he did by giving a history of his efforts, and the motives which prompted him thereto.

Felix having thus heard both parties, refused to pass any final sentence till he had more fully advised about it, and consulted Lysias, the governor of the castle, who was the most proper person to give an account of the sedition and tumult; commanding, in the mean time, that Paul should be kept under a guard, but at the same time enjoy the liberty of being visited by his friends, and receiving from them any office of friendship.

Soon after this, Felix's wife, Drusilla, a Jewess, and daughter of the elder Herod, came down to him to Cæsarea, in whose presence the governor sent for Paul, and gave him leave to explain the doctrines of christianity. In this discourse the apostle took occasion to insist upon the most important points, both of faith and practice, particularly the influence which a future judgment should have upon the whole tenor of the life and conduct. This discourse was wisely adapted to the state and temper of Felix; though when Paul described the terrors of the last judgment, he trembled on his throne, and was so greatly affected that he caused the apostle to break off abruptly, telling him that he would hear the remainder at a more convenient season.

He had much intercourse with Paul afterward, but not finding his selfish ambition gratified, he kept him prisoner two years; and left him there when he retired from office, in order to gratify the malice of the Jews, and engage them to speak the better of his government.

At length Paul appealed unto Cæsar; and soon after, king Agrippa, who succeeded Herod in the tetrarchate of Galilee, and his sister Bernice, came to Cæsarea to visit the governor.

Festus, who had succeeded Felix, embraced this opportunity of mentioning the case of the apostle to king Agrippa, together with the remarkable tumult the affair had occasioned among the Jews, and his appeal unto Cæsar. This excited the curiosity of the king, who was desirous of hearing what Paul had to say for himself. Accordingly he was brought before them, and made a speech, addressed particularly to Agrippa, wherein he again related the circumstances of his conversion, and his commission to preach the gospel, and his determination to continue in the work.

It was finally determined, however, that Paul should be sent to Rome, and, with several other prisoners of consequence, he was committed to the care of Julius, commander of a company belonging to the legion of Augustus; and was accompanied in his voyage by Luke, Aristarchus, Trophimus, and some others not mentioned by the sacred historian.

In the month of September, they embarked on board a

ship at Adramyttium, and sailed to Sidon, where the centurion courteously gave the apostle leave to go on shore to visit his friends and refresh himself. After a short stay, they sailed for Cyprus, and arrived opposite the Fair Havens, a place near Myra, a city of Lycia. Here, the season being far advanced, and Paul, foreseeing that it would be a dangerous voyage, persuaded them to put in and winter there.

The Roman centurion, however, thought the opinion of the master of the ship preferable, and they resolved to proceed, but were intercepted in their course by a violent gale, which drove them about fourteen days, and finally forced them to anchor, to avoid being thrown upon the rocks. The country near which they were, as Paul had foretold, was an island called Melita, now Malta, situated in the Lybian sea, between Syracuse and Africa.

Here they landed, and met with great civility from a barbarous people, who treated them with humanity, entertaining them with all the necessary accommodations; but while Paul was laying a few sticks on the fire, a viper, enlivened by the heat, came from among the wood, and fastened on his hand.

On seeing this, the inhabitants of the island concluded that he was certainly some notorious murderer, whom the Divine vengeance, though it suffered him to escape the sea, had reserved for a more public and solemn execution.

But when they saw him shake off the venomous creature into the fire, and no manner of harm ensue, they changed their sentiments, and cried out that he was a god. After three months' stay in this island, they again pursued their course toward Rome. The christians of this city, hearing of the apostle's coming, went to meet him as far as Three Taverns, about thirty miles out, and others as far as the Appii-forum, fifty-one miles distant from the capital.

They kindly embraced each other, and the liberty he saw the christians enjoy at Rome, greatly enlivened the spirits of the apostle. Having refreshed himself after the fatigue of his voyage, the apostle sent for the heads of the Jewish consistory there, and related the cause of his coming to them in the following manner: "Though I have been guilty of no

violation of the laws of our religion, yet I was delivered up by the Jews at Jerusalem, to the Roman governors, who more than once would have acquitted me, as innocent of any capital offense; but by the perverseness of my persecutors, I was obliged to appeal unto Cæsar; not that I had any thing to accuse my nation of: I had recourse to this method merely to clear mine own innocence."

Having thus removed a popular prejudice, he added, that the true cause of his sufferings was what their own religion had taught him, the belief and expectation of a future resurrection.

But his discourse had different effects on different hearers; some being convinced, and others persisting in their infidelity. For two whole years Paul dwelt at Rome, in a house he had hired for his own use; wherein he assiduously employed himself in preaching and writing for the good of the church.

Among others of the apostle's converts at Rome, was one Onesimus, who had formerly been a servant to Philemon, a person of distinction at Colosse, but had run away from his master, and fraudulently taken with him some things of value. Having rambled as far as Rome, he was converted by Paul, and by him returned to his master, with a short recommendatory letter, earnestly desiring him to pardon him; and, notwithstanding his former faults, to treat him kindly and use him as a brother; promising, withal, that if he had wronged or owed him any thing, he himself would repay it. This epistle may be considered as a master-piece of eloquence, in the persuasive way; for in it the apostle had recourse to all the considerations which friendship, religion, piety and tenderness can inspire, to reconcile an incensed master to his servant.

By what means Paul was discharged from the accusation the Jews brought against him we have no account in history; but it is natural to suppose that not having sufficient proof of what they alledged, or being informed that the crimes they accused him of were no violations of the Roman law, they durst not implead him before the emperor, and so permitted him to be discharged, of course. But, by whatever means

he procured his liberty, it is thought he wrote his epistle to the Hebrews before he left Italy, from whence he dates his Salutations.

The principal design of it is to magnify Christ, and the religion of the gospel, above Moses and the Jewish economy, in order to establish and confirm the converted Jews in the firm belief and profession of christianity, notwithstanding the trouble and persecutions that would certainly attend them.

Having thus discharged his ministry, both by preaching and writing, in Italy, Paul, accompanied by Timothy, prosecuted his long-intended journey into Spain, and, according to the testimony of several writers, crossed the sea, and preached the gospel in Britain.

What success he had in these western parts is not known; he, however, continued there eight or nine months, and then returned again into the East; visited Sicily, Greece and Crete, and then repaired to Rome.

Here he met with Peter, and was, together with him, thrown into prison, doubtless in the general persecution raised against the christians, under the pretense that they had set fire to the city. How long he remained in prison is uncertain; nor do we know whether he was scourged before his execution. He was, however, allowed the privilege of a Roman citizen, and therefore beheaded.

Being come to the place of execution, which was the Salvian waters, three miles from Rome, he cheerfully, after a solemn preparation, gave his neck to the fatal stroke; and from this vale of misery passed to the blissful regions of immortality, to the kingdom of his beloved Master,—the great Redeemer of the human race.

He was buried in Via Ostiensis, about two miles from Rome; and, about the year 317, Constantine the Great, at the instance of Pope Sylvester, built a stately church over his grave, adorned it with a hundred marble columns, and beautified it with the most exquisite workmanship.

Paul seems to have been eminently fitted for the apostleship of the Gentiles, to contend with and confute the grave

and the wise, the acute and the subtle, the sage and the learned, of the heathen world, and to wound them with arrows from their own quiver.

He seldom, indeed, made use of learning and philosophy; it being more agreeable to the design of the gospel to confound the wisdom and learning of the world by the plain doctrine of the cross.

He was humbled to the lowest step of debasement and condescension; none ever thinking better of others, or more meanly of himself. And though, when he had to deal with envious and malicious adversaries, who endeavored, by vilifying his person, to obstruct his ministry, he knew how to magnify his office, and to let them know that he was not inferior to the chiefest of the apostles; yet, at other times, he always declared to the world that he considered himself "less than the least of the saints;" nay, "the very chief of sinners."

His repentance and sobriety were remarkable, for he often abridged himself of the conveniency of lawful and necessary accommodations. What he taught to others he practiced himself: "his conversation was in heaven, and his desires were to depart and be with Christ; and hence it is very probable that he always led a single life, though some of the ancients rank him among the married apostles.

His kindness and charity were remarkable; but his charity to the souls of men was infinitely greater; fearing no dangers, refusing no labors, going through good and evil report, that he might gain men over to the knowledge of the truth, bring them out of the crooked paths, and place them in the straight way, that leadeth unto life eternal.

Nor was his charity to men greater than his zeal to God; laboring with all his might to promote the honor of his Divine Master.

When at Athens, he saw them involved in the grossest superstition and idolatry, and giving the honor that was due to God to statues and images. This fired his zeal, and he could not but let them know the sentiments of his mind, and how greatly they dishonored God, the Maker and Preserver of the world.

Nor, in the course of a most extensive ministry, was he tried with the dangers and difficulties he met with, or the troubles and opposition that were raised against him.

He did not want solicitations, both from Jews and Gentiles; and might, doubtless, in some measure, have made his own terms, had he been false to his trust, and quitted that sway which was then every where spoken against. But, alas! these things weighed little with our apostle, who "counted not his life dear unto him, so that he might finish his course with joy, and the ministry he had received of the Lord Jesus."

And, therefore, when he thought himself under the sentence of death, could triumphantly say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." In short, he was a man in whom the grace of God was displayed with peculiar lustre, and who gave the most convincing proof that the influence of gospel principles exceed all moral and legal obligations.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Barnabas and Stephen.

INSTRUCTION OF BARNABAS UNDER GAMALIEL; DEVOTION TO THE CHRISTIAN CAUSE; INHUMAN DEATH. REMARKABLE PIETY OF STEPHEN; STONED TO DEATH; PRAYS FOR HIS MURDERERS.

BARNABAS was at first called Joses, a softer termination generally given by the Greeks to Joseph.

His fellow disciples added the name of Barnabas, as significant of some extraordinary property in him.

Luke interprets it, "the son of consolation," from his being ever ready to administer to the afflicted, both by word and action. He was a descendant of the tribe of Levi, of a

family removed out of Judea, and settled in the isle of Cyprus, where they had purchased an estate, as the Levites might do out of their country. His parents, finding their son of a promising genius and disposition, placed him in one of the schools at Jerusalem, under the tuition of Gamaliel, Paul's master,—an accident which, in all probability, laid the foundation for that intimacy which afterward subsisted between these two eminent servants of the blessed Jesus.

The first mention we have of Barnabas, in the Holy Scriptures, is the record of that great and worthy service he did the church of Christ, by succoring it with the sale of his patrimony in Cyprus, the whole price of which he laid at the apostles' feet, to be put into the common stock, and disposed of as they should think fit, among the indigent followers of the blessed Jesus. This worthy example was followed by those who were blessed with temporal good; none kept their plenty to themselves, but turned their houses and lands into money, and devoted it to the common use of the church.

Barnabas became considerable in the ministry and government of the church, for we find that Paul, coming to Jerusalem three years after his conversion, and not readily procuring admittance into the church, because he had been so grievous a persecutor of it, and might still be suspected of a design to betray it, addressed himself to Barnabas, a leading man among the christians, and one that had personal knowledge of him.

About four or five years after this, the agreeable news was brought to Jerusalem, that several of their body, who had been driven out of Judea by the persecutions raised about Stephen, had preached at Antioch with such success, that a great number, both of Jews and proselytes, embraced christianity, and were desirous that some of the apostles should come down and visit them. This request was immediately granted, and Barnabas was deputed to settle the new plantation; and being himself 'a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith," his charitable deeds accompanying his discourses, and his pious life exemplifying his sound doctrine, the people were greatly influenced by him, and very consid

erable additions were made to the christian church. But there being too large a field for one laborer, he went to fetch Saul from Tarsus, who came back with him to Antioch, and assisted him a whole year in establishing that church.

They were afterward associated together in the work of the ministry, till some difference arising between them, they separated, after which, the sacred writings give us no account of Barnabas; nor are the ecclesiastical writers agreed among themselves with regard to the actions of this apostle after his sailing for Cyprus.

This, however, seems to be certain, that he did not spend the whole remainder of his life in that island, but visited different parts of the world, preaching the glad tidings of the gospel, healing the sick, and working other miracles among the Gentiles. After long and painful travels, attended with different degrees of success in different places, he returned to Cyprus, his native country, where he suffered martyrdom in the following manner: Certain Jews coming from Syria to Salamis, where Barnabas was then preaching the gospel, being highly exasperated at his success, fell upon him as he was disputing in the synagogue, dragged him out, and after the most inhuman tortures, stoned him to death. His kinsman, John Mark, who was a spectator of this barbarous action, privately interred his body in a cave, where it is said it remained till the time of the emperor Zeno, in the year of Christ, 485, when it was discovered with Matthew's gospel in Hebrew, written with his own hand, lying on his breast.

WITH regard to the birth, country, and parents of Stephen, both the Scriptures and ancient writers are silent.

Epiphanius is of opinion that he was one of the seventy disciples; but this is very uncertain.

Our blessed Saviour appointed his seventy disciples to teach the doctrines and preach the glad tidings of the gospel; but it does not appear that Stephen and the six other deacons had any particular designation before they were chosen for the service of the tables; and therefore Stephen could not have been one of our Lord's disciples, though he

might have often followed him and listened to his discourses. He was remarkably zealous for the cause of religion, and full of the Holy Ghost; working many wonderful miracles before the people, and pressing them with the greatest earnestness to embrace the gospel. This highly provoked the Jews; and some of the synagogue of the freed men of Cyrenia, Alexandria, and other places, entered into dispute with him; but being unable to resist the wisdom and spirit by which he spake, they suborned false witnesses against him, to testify that they heard him blaspheme against Moses and against God.

Nor did they stop here; they stirred up the people by their calumnies, so that they dragged him before the council of the nation, or great Sanhedrim, where they produced false witnesses against him, who deposed what they had heard him speak against the temple, and against the law, and affirm that Jesus of Nazareth would destroy the holy place, and abolish the law of Moses.

Stephen, supported by his own innocence and an invisible power from on high, appeared undaunted in the midst of this assembly, his countenance shining like that of an angel; when the high priest asked him what he had to offer against the accusations laid to his charge, when he made a speech, in which he rehearsed the dealings of God with his people Israel, and in its application made them feel the guilt of betraying and murdering the Holy One.

At these words they were so highly enraged, that they all gnashed their teeth against him. But Stephen, lifting up his eyes to heaven, saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of Omnipotence; upon which he said to the council, "I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God." This so greatly provoked the Jews, that they cried out with one voice, and stopped their ears, as if they had heard some dreadful blasphemy; and falling upon him, they dragged him out of the city, and stoned him to death. It was the custom of the Jews, on these occasions, for the witnesses to throw the first stone. Whether they observed this particular at the martyrdom of

Stephen is uncertain; but the evangelist tells us that the witnesses were principally concerned in this action; for they stripped off his clothes, and laid them at the feet of a young man whose name was Saul, then a violent persecutor of the christian church, but afterward one of the most zealous preachers of the gospel.

Stephen, while they were mangling his body with stones, was praying to his heavenly Father for their pardon. "Lord," said he, "lay not this sin to their charge." And then, calling on his dear Redeemer to receive his spirit, he yielded up his soul.

CHAPTER XXX.

Timothy and Titus.

FRIENDSHIP OF PAUL AND TIMOTHY; THE TITLE OF BISHOP CONFERRED UPON THE LATTER. PARENTAGE OF TITUS; SCENE OF HIS LABORS, AND FINAL DECEASE AT AN ADVANCED AGE.

TIMOTHY was a convert and disciple of Paul. He was born, according to some, at Lystra; or, according to others, at Derbe. His father was a Gentile, but his mother a Jewess, whose name was Eunice, and that of his grandmother, Lois. These particulars are noticed, because Paul commends their piety, and the good education they had given Timothy.

When Paul came to Derbe and Lystra, about the year of Christ, 51 or 52, the good report he heard of Timothy induced him to take him along; but he initiated him at Lystra, before he received him into his company.

Timothy applied himself to labor with Paul in the business of the gospel, and did him very important services, through the whole course of his preaching.

It is not known when he was made a bishop; but it is believed he received very early the imposition of the apostles' hands; and that in consequence of a particular revelation, or

direction of the Holy Ghost. Paul calls him not only his dearly-beloved son, but also his brother, the companion of his labors, and a man of God. He declared that there was no one more united with him in heart and mind than Timothy.

He accompanied him on many of his journeys, and when Paul returned from Rome, in 64, he left Timothy at Ephesus, to take care of that church, of which he was the first bishop, as he is recognized by the council of Chalcedon.

Paul wrote to him from Macedonia the first of the two epistles which are addressed to him.

After the apostle came to Rome, in the year 65, being now very near his death, he wrote to him his second letter, which is full of the marks of his kindness and tenderness for this dear disciple, and which is justly looked upon as the last will of Paul. He desires him to come to Rome, and if he did, as is probably the case, he must have been a witness there of the martyrdom of this apostle, in the year of Christ, 66.

If he did not die before the year 97, we can hardly doubt but that he must be the pastor of the church of Ephesus, to whom John writes in his Revelation; though the reproaches with which he seems to load him for his declension in having left his first love, do not seem to agree to so holy a man as Timothy was, or show that men eminently holy may yet fall from their steadfastness.

The greater number of interpreters, however, think that these reproaches do not so much concern the person of Timothy, as that of some members of his church, whose zeal was grown cool. But others are persuaded that they may be applied to Timothy himself, who made ample amends by the martyrdom which he suffered for the reproaches mentioned by John.

TITUS was a Gentile by religion and birth, but converted by Paul, who calls him his son. Jerome says that he was Paul's interpreter; and that probably because he might write what Paul dictated, or explained in Latin what this apostle

said in Greek; or rendered into Greek, what Paul said in Hebrew or Syriac.

Paul took him with him into Jerusalem, when he went thither in the year 51, the vulgar era, about deciding the question which was then started, whether the converted Gentiles ought to be made subject to the ceremonies of the law. Some would then have obliged him to circumcise Titus, but neither he nor Titus would consent to it.

Titus was sent by the same apostle to Corinth, upon occasion of some disputes which then divided the church. He was made bishop of the isle of Crete, about the 63d year of Christ, when Paul was obliged to quit this island, in order to take care of the other churches.

Titus has left an epistle which has always been acknowledged by the church. It is not certainly known from what place it was written, nor by whom it was sent.

He was deputed to preach the gospel in Dalmatia, and he was still there in the year 65, when the apostle wrote his second epistle to Timothy. He afterward returned into Crete; from which it is said he propagated the gospel into the neighboring islands. He died at the age of 94, and was buried in Crete. We are assured that the cathedral of the city of Candia is dedicated to his name, and that his head is preserved there entire. The Greeks keep his festival on the 25th of August, and the Latins on the 4th of January.

PART III.

Fathers and Martyrs.

INS OF ANTIOCH

CHAPTER I.

Ignatius.

APPEARANCE BEFORE TRAJAN; HIS LETTERS; HIS CHARITY AND HUMILITY; HIS MARTYRDOM.

IT was in the year 107 that Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, was martyred for the faith of Jesus. On the death of Euodias, about the year 70, he had been appointed in his room by the apostles, who were then alive. He governed the church during this long period. Nor was it a small indication of the continued grace of God to that city to have been blessed so long with such a luminary. We have only a short account given of his ministry, and that in the "Acts of Ignatius," a piece of martyrology first published by archbishop Usher, from two old manuscripts, in 1647, and carrying in it stronger marks of credibility than is usual with such compositions. These were compiled by those who went with him from Antioch, and were eye-witnesses of his sufferings.

Here he is said to be "a man in all things like to the apostles: as a good governor, by the helm of prayer and fasting, by the constancy of his doctrine and spiritual labor, he opposed himself to the floods of the adversary: he was like a Divine lamp, illuminating the hearts of the faithful by his exposition of the Holy Scriptures; and lastly, to preserve his church, he scrupled not freely to expose himself to a bitter death.

Ambition and the lust of power were not stronger features in the character of Cæsar than the desire of martyrdom was in that of Ignatius. Divine providence, however, preserved him for the benefit of the church during the persecution of Domitian, and reserved him to the time of Trajan.

This prince being come to Antioch about the tenth year of

his reign, in the year 107, in his way to the Parthian war, Ignatius, fearing for the christians, and hoping to avert the storm by offering himself to suffer in their stead, came voluntarily into the presence of Trajan.

We give the conference as it stands in the Acts, a monument of false glory shrouding itself under superstition and ignorance on the one hand, and of true glory supported by the faith and hope of Jesus on the other.

Being come into the emperor's presence, he was thus addressed: "What an impious wretch art thou, both to transgress our commands and to inveigle other souls into the same folly, to their ruin?"

Ignatius answered, "Theophorus ought not to be called so; for wicked spirits are departed from the servants of God. But if you call me impious because of my hostility, I own the charge in that respect. For I dissolve all their snares, sustained inwardly by Christ, the Heavenly King."

Pray, who is Theophorus? said Trajan. "He who has Christ in his breast," was the reply. "And thinkest thou not that gods reside in us also, who fight for us against our enemies?" "You mistake in calling the demons of the nations by the name of gods. For there is only one God, who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is; and one Jesus Christ, his only begotten son, whose kingdom be my portion."

"His kingdom, do you say, who was crucified under Pilate?" "His who crucified my sin with its author, and has put all the fraud and malice of Satan under their feet, who carry him in their heart." "Dost thou then carry him who was crucified within thee?" "I do; for it is written, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them." Then Trajan pronounced this sentence against him: "Since Ignatius confesses that he carries within himself that was crucified, we command that he be carried bound by soldiers to great Rome, there to be thrown to the beasts, for the entertainment of the people."

Ignatius was puzzled to conceive what could induce Trajan to order his being sent so long a journey for execution.

It might seem more natural for him to have ordered him to suffer in view of his own flock, in order to deter them from christianity. But Trajan might think the example much more striking and extensive by using the method which he took. At any rate, Providence undoubtedly displayed the honors of the cross much more copiously by this means, as it subsequently appears.

The seven epistles of this great man, written on his way to martyrdom,—six to churches of Asia Minor and one to Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, undoubtedly genuine as they are, and accurately distinguished from all corrupt interpolations, will come in aid to the acts of his martyrdom. By them, he being dead, yet speaketh; and what the gospel can do for men who really believe it, and feel the energy of the Spirit of its Divine Author, has not often been more illustriously displayed.

From Antioch he was hurried by his guards to Zeleucia; sailing from thence, after great fatigue, he arrived at Smyrna. While the ship remained in port, he was allowed the pleasure of visiting Polycarp, who was bishop of the christians there. They had been fellow-disciples of John; and the holy joy of their interview may be conceived by those who know what the love of Christ is, and how it operates in the breasts of those in whom he dwells. Deputies were sent from the various churches of Asia to attend and console him, and to receive some benefit by his spiritual communications.

From hence he sent letters to the churches.

Four of the seven were written from Smyrna,—those to churches of Ephesus, Magnesia, Tralles and Rome.

These letters add something to the stock of history, as they introduce to our acquaintance the Asiatic churches of Magnesia and Tralles, which else had been unknown to us. They show the whole fertile region of Asia Propria to have been more thoroughly evangelized than any other part of the world at that time. Indeed, from the time of Paul's labors at Ephesus to the martyrdom of Ignatius, that is, for half a century or upward, the truth as it is in Jesus seems to be preserved in its purity in these churches.

The unaffected charity and humility of Ignatius deserve attention. He alone seemed unconscious of his attainments, while the whole christian world admired him. In his epistle to the church of Ephesus, he says, "I do not dictate to you, as if I were a person of any consequence. For, though I am bound for the name of Christ, I am not yet perfected in Christ Jesus.

"For now I begin to be a disciple, and speak to you as my teachers. For I ought to be sustained by you in faith, in admonition, in patience and long-suffering.

"But, since charity will not suffer me to be silent concerning you, for this reason I take upon me to exhort you to run together with me according to the mind of God." Nothing lies more on his heart in all his epistles than to recommend the most perfect union of the members of the church, and to reprobate schisms and dissensions.

He conceives of them as all united to Jesus Christ, all partaking of the same spiritual life, and, therefore, to separate from the church, and to lose that subordination in which they all stood to their pastors, was to tear in pieces the body of Christ, and to expose themselves to the seductions of those who would draw them from the faith and hope of the gospel.

The subject of his letter to the Roman christians was to entreat them not to use any methods for his deliverance. He had the prize of martyrdom before him, and he was unwilling to be robbed of it.

He speaks with uncommon pathos; but hear his own words:

"I fear your charity, lest it should hinder me, for it will be easy for you to do what you please. But it is difficult for me to attain to God, if you spare me.

"If you be silent in my behalf, I shall be made partaker of God; but if you love my flesh, I shall again have my course to run. I beseech you, that you show not an unreasonable benevolence toward me. Suffer me to be the food of beasts, by whom I shall attain to God. Rather encourage them, that they may become my sepulchre, that nothing of my body may be left, that I may give no trouble to any one when I fall asleep.

"Let fire and the cross, let the companies of wild beasts, let breaking of bones and tearing of limbs, let the grinding of the whole body, and all the malice of the devil come upon me; be it so, only may I enjoy Jesus Christ.

"All the ends of the world, and the kingdoms of it will profit me nothing. Him I desire who rose again for us. He is my gain laid up for me; suffer me to imitate the passion of my God."

Certainly no words can express in a stronger manner the intenseness of spiritual desire, and one may look down with contempt and pity on all the magnanimity of secular heroes and patriots, as compared with this.

At length being brought to Neapolis, he passed through Philippi, through Macedonia, and that part of Epirus, which is next to Epidamnus.

Having found a ship in one of the seaports, his conductors sailed over the Adriatic, and from thence entering into the Tuscan sea, and passing by several islands and cities, they came in view of Puteoli, which being shown to him, he hastened to go forth, desirous to tread in the steps of the apostle Paul; but a violent wind arising would not permit him to accomplish his design. The wind continuing favorable in one day and night, "we indeed," (say the relaters of the martyrdom, his attendants,) "were unwillingly hurried on, as sorrowing to think of being separated from the martyr. But to him it happened according to his wish, that he might sooner leave the world, and depart to his Lord whom he loved. Wherefore sailing into the Roman port, and those impure sports being at an end, the soldiers began to be offended with his slowness; but the bishop joyfully complied with their hastiness."

The port was at Ostia, some miles from Rome, and here he was met by the Roman christians, who intimated their strong desire for his preservation. Some of them probably had some influence, and were willing to try it. Ignatius, however, was inflexible. He was brought to Rome, and presented to the prefect of the city.

When he was led to execution, he was attended by a

number of the brethren, and was allowed to join in prayer with them.

He was then led into the amphitheatre, and speedily thrown to the wild beasts. He had here also his wish. The beasts were his grave. A few bones only were left, which the deacons gathered, carefully preserved, and afterward buried at Antioch.

Thus was the christian spirit fully exemplified in Ignatius, and the power of the gospel to sustain amid fiery persecutions clearly exhibited.

CHAPTER II.

Justin Martyr.

SEARCH AFTER TRUTH; EMBRACES CHRISTIANITY; HIS WRITINGS; APPREHENDED AND BROUGHT BEFORE THE GOVERNOR; HIS DEATH.

JUSTIN MARTYR deserves particular notice, as being the first among the "Apologists" whose writings have come down to our times, and the first christian father, intimately known to us, in whom we observe christianity in contact with the Hellenic culture, and more particularly with the Platonic philosophy; in which respect, he is the precursor of the Alexandrian church teachers. The account of his life and education is to be derived, for the most part, from his own writings.

He was born at Neapolis, in Samaria, anciently called Sichem,—at that time a Roman-Greek colony, in which the Greek language and culture predominated.

In his youth he traveled for the improvement of his understanding, and Alexandria afforded him all the entertainment which an inquisitive mind could derive from the fashionable studies.

The Stoics appeared to him at first the masters of happiness. He gave himself up to one of this sect, till he found he could learn nothing from him of the nature of God.

He next betook himself to a peripatetic, whose anxious desire of settling the price of his instructions convinced Justin that truth did not dwell with him.

A Pythagorean next engaged his attention, who, requiring of him the previous knowledge of music, astronomy, and geometry, dismissed him for the present, when he understood he was unfurnished with those studies.

In much solicitude he applied himself to a Platonic philosopher, with a more plausible appearance of success than from any of the foregoing. He now gave himself up to retirement.

As he was walking near the sea, he was met by an aged person of a venerable appearance, whom he beheld with much attention. "Do you know me?" says he. When Justin answered in the negative, he asked him why he surveyed him with such attention.

"I wondered," said he, "to find any person here." "But what brought you here?" says he. Justin professed his love of private meditation; the other hinted at the absurdity of mere speculation, abstracted from practice, which gave occasion to Justin to express his ardent desire of knowing God, and to expatiate on the praises of philosophy. The stranger by degrees endeavored to cure him of his ignorant admiration of Plato and Pythagoras, and to point out to him the writings of the Hebrew prophets as being much more ancient than any of those called philosophers, and led him to some view of christianity, in its nature and in its evidences, adding, "above all things, pray that the gates of light may be opened to thee; for they are not discernible, nor to be understood by all, except God and his Christ give to a man to understand."

"The man having spoken these things, and much more, left me," says Justin, "directing me to pursue these things, and I saw him no more. Immediately a fire was kindled in my soul, and I had a strong affection for the prophets and those men who are the friends of Christ, and weighing within myself his words, I found this to be the only sure philosophy.

"I found the religion of Christ to have a majesty in its nature, adapted to terrify those who are in the way of transgression, as well as a sweetness, peace, and serenity for those who are truly conversant with it."

He owns in another place, that the example of christians suffering death so serenely for their faith, moved his mind not a little, "for," said he, "when I saw them meet death, and all that is accounted terrible among men, without dismay, I knew it to be impossible that they should live in sin and lust. I despised the opinion of the multitude; I glory in being called a christian, and take every pains to prove myself worthy of the calling."

His conversion seems to have taken place some time in the reign of Adrian. "I found in the doctrine of Christ," says he, "the only sure and salutary philosophy; for it has in it a power to awe, which restrains those who depart from the right way; and the sweetest peace is the portion of them that practice it. That this doctrine is sweeter than honey, is evident; since we who have been formed by it, refuse to deny his name, even unto death."

After becoming a christian, he still retained the mantle which he had worn as a pagan philosopher and ascetic, availing himself of his former garb and mode of life as a means which enabled him easily to introduce, in his intercourse with men, religious and philosophical subjects, and through these to prepare the way for bringing home the gospel to their hearts. Thus he may be regarded as an itinerant preacher in the garb of a philosopher.

Coming to Rome in the time of Antoninus Pius, he there wrote a confutation of the heretics; particularly of Marcion, the son of a bishop born in Pontus, who was ejected from the church, and fled to Rome.

That *holiness*, without which no man shall see the Lord, and which was the great design of Christ to promote, found in this pretended christian a cordial enemy; and Justin, who had tasted of the holy nature of the gospel in his own experience, withstood him both in conversation and by his writings.

About the year 140, he published his excellent Apology for the Christians, addressed to Antonnius Pius, which may be reasonably supposed to have had a considerable influence on the political conduct of that prudent emperor, with respect to christians. There was nothing in their spirit and conduct to provoke persecution. He describes the customs of the primitive christians in public worship, and in the administration of the sacraments, in order to show the falsity of the charges generally urged against them.

Not long after this, he left Rome, and went to Ephesus, where he had his discourse with Trypho, the Jew, the substance of which he gives us in a Dialogue, the object of which is to prove that Jesus is the Messiah promised in the Old Testament, and to refute the objections then commonly urged by the Jews against christianity. The philosopher's cloak which Justin wore, led Trypho to accost him as he was taking a solitary walk; and a conversation arose between them about the knowledge of God, which Justin finally turns to the subject of christianity, and this conversation is here supposed to be put down in writing.

On his return to Rome, he had frequent contests with Crescens, the philosopher, a man equally remarkable for malignity to christians, and the most horrid vices. He now presented his Second Apology to M. Antoninus Philosophus, the successor of Pius, and a determined enemy to christians.

He was in hopes of softening his mind toward the christians, as he had done that of his predecessor, but in vain.

Marcus was their enemy during his whole reign, and they scarce ever had an enemy more implacable. He was not a man to exercise common justice toward christians.

The philosophic garb was no shield to Justin, even in the eyes of an emperor, who piqued himself on the surname of philosopher. The sincerity of his christian attachments, outweighed every argument and every plausible appearance in his favor. Crescens procured his imprisonment for the crime of being a christian, the greatest evil of which a human being could be guilty in the eyes of this emperor.

He and six of his companions having been apprehended,

were brought before Rusticus, the prefect, who, it is supposed, had succeeded Qurbicius, a man famous for his attachment to stoicism, and a person of considerable eminence. He undertook to persuade Justin to obey the gods, and comply with the emperor's edicts. He defended the reasonableness of his religion. Upon which the governor inquired in what kind of learning and discipline he had been educated. He told him, that he had endeavored to understand all kinds of discipline, and tried all methods of learning, but finding satisfaction in none of them, he at last had found rest in the christian doctrine, however fashionable it might be to despise it. "Wretch!" replies the indignant magistrate, "art thou then captivated by that religion?" "I am," says Justin; "I follow the christians, and their doctrine is right." "What is their doctrine?" was asked. "It is this," was the reply: "We believe the one only God to be the Creator of all things visible and invisible, and confess our Lord Jesus Christ to be the Son of God, foretold by the prophets of old, and who shall hereafter appear the Judge of mankind, a Saviour, teacher, and master to all those who are duly instructed by him. As for myself, I am too mean to be able to say any thing becoming his infinite Deity; this was the business of the prophets, who many ages ago had foretold the coming of the Son of God into the world." "Where do the christians usually assemble?" "The God of the christians is not confined to any particular place." "In what place do you instruct your scholars?" Justin mentioned the place in which he dwelt, and told him that there he explained christianity to all who resorted to him. The prefect having severally examined his companions, again addressed Justin: "Hear thou, who hast the character of an orator, and imaginest thyself to be in the possession of truth. If I scourge thee from head to foot, thinkest thou that thou shalt go to heaven?" "Although I suffer what you threaten, yet I expect to enjoy the position of all true christians, as I know that the Divine grace and favor is laid up for all such, and shall be so, while the world endures." "Do you think you will go to heaven and receive a reward?" "I not only think so, but I know

it, and have a certainty of it which excludes all doubt." Rusticus insisted that they should all go together, and sacrifice to the gods. "No man, whose understanding is sound," replies Justin, "will desert true religion for the sake of error and impiety." "Unless you comply, you shall be tormented without mercy." "We desire nothing more sincerely than to endure tortures for our Lord Jesus Christ, and be saved. Hence our happiness is promoted, and we shall have confidence before the awful tribunal of our Lord and Saviour, before which, by the Divine appointment, the whole world must appear. Despatch quickly your purpose, we are christians, and can not sacrifice to idols." The governor then pronounced sentence: "As to those who refuse to sacrifice to the gods, and to obey the imperial edicts, let them be first scourged, and then beheaded according to the laws."

The martyrs rejoiced, and blessed God, and being led back to prison, were whipped and afterward beheaded. The dead bodies were taken by christian friends, and decently interred.

Thus slept in Jesus, the christian philosopher, Justin, about the year 163, and about the third or fourth year of the reign of Marcus

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CHAPTER III.

Origen.

EARLY DOMESTIC TEACHING; ENERGY IN THE STUDY OF THEOLOGY; PRODUCES SEVERAL TREATISES; PERSECUTION AND DEATH.

ORIGEN, with the surname Adamantios, was born in Alexandria, in the year 185. In connection with his early culture, it is important to remark, that his father Leonides, a devoted christian, and, as it is conjectured, a rhetorician, was in a condition to give him a good literary, as well as a pious christian education.

Both had an abiding influence on the direction of his inner

life; the development of mind and heart proceeded in his case, with equal step; a striving after truth and holiness continued ever to be the actuating tendency of his life.

Leonides made his son commit daily a portion of sacred Scripture to memory. The boy took great delight in his task, and already gave indications of his profoundly inquisitive mind.

Not satisfied with the explanation of the literal sense, which his father gave him, he required the thoughts embodied in the passages he had committed to be fully opened out, so that Leonides frequently found himself embarassed. The father chided, indeed, his inconsiderate curiosity, and exhorted him to be satisfied, as became his years, with the literal sense; but he secretly rejoiced in the promising talents of the youth, and with a full heart thanked God he had given him such a son.

Often, it is said, when the boy was asleep, he would uncover his breast, kissing it as a temple where the Holy Spirit designed to prepare his dwelling, and congratulated himself that he possessed such a treasure.

When he was a boy, he was a pupil of Clement the catechist; but, it is evident that the education of his father had more influence in giving the first religious direction to his mind, than the instructions of Clement.

A persecution, which befel the christians in Egypt under the reign of Septimius Severus, gave Origen, when a youth of sixteen, an opportunity of displaying the ardor of his faith.

The example of the martyrs fired him with such enthusiasm, that he was ready to avow himself a christian before the pagan authorities, and expose himself to certain death.

Such was the zeal of the enthusiastic christian youth; quite different was the judgment of the prudent christian man, who better understood the nature of the christian system of morality, from the study of that system itself, and from contemplating the life of Christ and the apostles.

When the father of Origen himself was thrown into prison, the son felt impelled, still more than before, to go and meet death along with him. Remonstrance and entreaty having

been tried in vain to dissuade him from his purpose, his mother knew of no other way to detain him, than by concealing his garments.

Then the love of Christ so far exceeded all other emotions, that, seeing himself prevented from sharing in his father's imprisonment and death, he wrote to him: "Look to it, that thou dost not change thy mind on our account."

Leonides died a martyr; and as his property was confiscated, he left behind him a helpless widow, with six young children besides Origen. The latter was kindly received into the family of a rich and noble lady of Alexandria. Here he characteristically displayed his steadfast adherence to that which he had recognized as the true faith, showing how much he prized it above all things else.

He was soon, however, enabled to free himself from this condition of dependence. Having, by his various attainments and gifts of mind, by his zeal for the cause of the gospel, and by his pure, exemplary life, acquired a name among the heathens, he was applied to, now that the office of catechist at Alexandria had been made vacant in the persecution, by a number who were seeking for instruction in christianity; and, through the instrumentality of the young man, some were conducted to the faith, who afterward became renowned as martyrs or teachers of the church.

By this zeal and activity in promoting the spread of christianity, he could not fail to draw upon himself more and more the hatred of the fanatic multitude. Often was he rescued from threatening danger by Providence, when soldiers had already surrounded the place where he resided, and he was obliged to escape secretly from one house to another.

At one time he was seized by a band of pagans, who dressed him in the robes of a priest of Serapis, and conducted him, thus arrayed, to the steps of the temple. Here they placed in his hand a branch of palm, which he was bid to distribute, in the customary manner, to those who entered. He did as he was bidden, but said to those to whom he presented the branches, "Receive not the idol's palm, but the palm of Christ."

His successful labors, in imparting religious instruction, drew on him the attention of Demetrius, bishop of Alexandria, who was induced to confer on him the office of catechist in the Alexandrian church. To this office, however, no salary was then affixed; and, as he now wished to have it in his power to devote himself wholly to the labors of his spiritual calling and to his theological studies, without being interrupted or withdrawn from them by foreign occupations, and as he did not choose to be dependent on any one for the means of subsistence, he determined to sell a collection of beautiful copies of the ancient authors, which he had been forming, at great pains, for his own use, to a literary amateur, who, in compensation, allowed him, for several years, four oboles a day. This was enough to satisfy the very limited wants of Origen; for he led the life of the most rigid ascetic.

He now gave himself up to the study of the Bible and its literal interpretation, and there began the great change in the theological bent of his mind. It became his endeavor to trace the vestiges of truth in all human systems; to examine all things, that he might every where separate the true from the false.

His residence in Alexandria, where sects so widely different were brought together; his journey to Rome, (in the year 211;) his journeys to and within Palestine, to Achaia, to Cappadocia, gave him opportunity, as he tells us himself, of visiting those who pretended to any extraordinary knowledge, and of becoming acquainted with and examining their doctrines. He made it his principle not to suffer himself to be governed by the traditional opinion of the multitude, but to hold fast that only as truth which he found after unbiased examination.

By this liberality of mind, it was the happiness of Origen to bring back many heretics, with whom he fell in contact at Alexandria, particularly Gnostics, to the simple doctrine of the gospel. One remarkable example of this sort was Ambrosius, a wealthy man, who, not satisfied with the manner in which christianity had been exhibited to him, in the common representations of the church teachers, had sought, and

supposed he had found, a more spiritual conception of it among the Gnostics; until, through the influence of Origen, he was undeceived of his error, and rejoiced at now finding, through his means, the right Gnosis at the same time with the true faith. He became Origen's warmest friend, and endeavored especially to promote his literary labors for the good of the church.

That he might avail himself of every help, Origen studied Hebrew, after he had arrived at the age of manhood,—a task of some difficulty to a Greek. He undertook an emendation of the biblical manuscripts, by comparing them with one another. He is the creator of sacred literature among the christians, although his arbitrary principles of interpretation prevented in his own case the full realization of all those results which might otherwise have been expected from it.

As the number of those who resorted to him for religious instruction continued to increase, and at the same time his literary labors on the Scriptures, which extended over a widening field, claimed more of his attention; in order to gain time, he shared the task of catechist with his friend Heraclas, giving over to the latter the preparatory religious instruction, and reserving for himself the exacter instruction of the more advanced.

The division of his official labors in this department made it possible for him to enlarge the sphere of his activity as a teacher of the church, in giving a course of lectures, in which he expounded to his pupils all the ancient philosophers in whom a moral and religious element was to be found, and sought to train them to that mental freedom which would enable them every where to separate truth from the mixture of falsehood.

Thus he entitled himself to the great merit of diffusing a more liberal system of christian and scientific education, of which the schools that resulted from his labors are the evidence.

It was also his lot to conduct many, who had been drawn to him solely through the love of science, by gradual steps, to faith in the gospel.

Some opposed him in his work, but the efforts of his enemies only contributed to extend the sphere of his activity. He removed to Palestine, a circumstance important in its consequences, an opportunity being thus given him of laboring also from that point, for the diffusion of a liberal scientific spirit in the church; and long were the traces of his activity to be discerned in these districts.

Here, too, a circle of young men gathered around him, who were trained under his influence to fill the posts of theologians and church teachers. Here he composed among other works his treatise on the utility of prayer, and on the exposition of the Lord's Prayer, which he addressed to his friend Ambrosius.

He maintained an active correspondence with the most distinguished church teachers in Cappadocia, Palestine and Arabia; and he was often invited to assist at deliberations on the concerns of foreign churches.

During the persecution of Maximin, the Thracian, in which two of his friends had much to suffer, he addressed to them his treatise on martyrdom, in which he exhorts them to steadfastness, and at the same time shows the energy of his unwavering trust and zeal in the gospel faith.

At length he was induced to flee to a place of safety, and accordingly repaired to Cæsarea in Cappadocia; but, on the breaking out of the persecution there, he retired to the house of Juliana, a christian virgin, who concealed and entertained him in her dwelling during the space of two years.

Here he made an important discovery, in an ancient translation, not before known to exist, of some books of the Old Testament, which enabled him to bring to a completion the great work of collecting the ancient versions extant, and comparing them with the Hebrew,—a work in which he had long been engaged.

After the assassination of Maximin, and under the reign of the emperor Gordian, in the year 238, he was enabled to return once more to Cæsarea, and resume there his earlier labors.

To the end of his life he was occupied with theological

labors. When he was sixty years of age, he, for the first time, permitted his discourses to be taken down by short-hand writers. In what high consideration he stood with the churches of these countries, is evident from the fact, that on important ecclesiastical questions, where it was difficult to come to a decision, his opinion was consulted by synods of bishops.

As an instance of this kind, a controversy had been excited by a party among the Arabian christians, who asserted that the human soul died with the body, and that it was to be revived only with the body at the resurrection,—an ancient Jewish notion. The convention of a *great synod* came to be thought necessary for the purpose of settling these disputes. As they could not come to an agreement, Origen was sent for; and it was brought about by his influence that the opponents of the soul's natural immortality confessed and renounced their error.

Origen, who, on account of some particular opinions, was, by a great part of the church stigmatized as a heretic and enemy to the evangelical scheme of faith, is said in the last days of a life consecrated to labor and conflict in behalf of that which he considered to be the cause of Christ, to have refuted by his conduct the accusations of his adversaries, and shown how he was ready to sacrifice all for the faith,—how he belonged to that number who are willing to hate even their own life for the Lord's sake.

As the fury of the enemies of christianity, in the Decian persecution, was directed particularly against *those* men who were distinguished among the christians for their station, wealth, or their knowledge, and their activity in promulgating the faith, it was natural that such a man as Origen should become a shining mark for fanatical cruelty. After a steadfast confession, he was thrown into prison; and here it was attempted, in conformity with the plan of the Decian persecution, to overcome the infirmity of age, by exquisite and gradually increasing tortures. But the faith which he bore at heart sustained the weakness of old age, and gave him power to withstand every trial. After having suffered so much, he

wrote from his prison a letter full of consolation and encouragement for others.

The circumstances which contributed first to *moderate*, and then bring wholly to an end, this persecution, procured for Origen freedom and repose. Yet the sufferings which he had undergone served perhaps to hasten his death, which took place about the year 254, in the seventieth year of his age.

His influence on theological culture was no longer connected with his person, but continued to spread independently of the man, through his writings and his scholars, for he left behind him disciples imbued with his own spirit, who were disposed to perpetuate his teachings, and thus extend his influence.

CHAPTER IV.

Irenæus.

INSTRUCTION UNDER POLYCARP; SUCCEEDS POTHINUS AS BISHOP; IS PUT TO DEATH; CHARACTER OF WRITINGS.

IT is to be wished we had a more copious account of this man. The place of his birth is quite uncertain.

His name, however, points him out to be a Grecian. His instructors in christianity were Papias, bishop of Hierapolis, and the renowned Polycarp. The former is generally allowed to have been a man of real sanctity, but of slender capacity. He, as well as Polycarp, had been a disciple of John, and with all the imbecility of judgment which is ascribed to him, might, under God, have been of signal service to Irenæus.

But the instructions of Polycarp seem to have made the deepest impressions on his mind from his early life.

He still remembered in his old age what he had heard in his youth from his venerable teacher, concerning the life and doctrines of Christ and the apostles.

In a writing addressed to Florinus, a false teacher, with whom, in his youth, he had enjoyed the society of Polycarp, he says: "These doctrines, the elders who preceded us, who associated also with the apostles, did not teach thee; for while I was yet a boy, I saw thee in company with Polycarp, in Asia Minor; for I bear in remembrance what happened then, better than what happens now. What we have heard in childhood, grows along with the soul, and becomes one with it; so that I can describe the place in which the blessed Polycarp sat and spake; his going in and out; his manner of life, and the shape of his person; the discourses he delivered to the congregation; how he told of his intercourse with John and the rest, who had seen the Lord; how he reported their sayings, and what he had heard from them respecting the Lord, his miracles and doctrine.

"As he had received all from the eye-witnesses of his life, he narrated it in accordance with Scripture.

"These things, by virtue of the grace of God imparted to me, I listened to, even then, with eagerness; and wrote them down, not on paper, but in my heart; and by the grace of God, I constantly bring them up again fresh to my memory."

After the martyrdom of Pothinus, bishop of Lyons, Irenæus became his successor. Never was any pastor more severely tried by a tempestuous scene. Violent persecution without, and subtle heresies within, called for the exertion, at once, of consummate dexterity, and of magnanimous resolution.

Irenæus was favored with a large measure of both, and weathered out the storm. But heresy proved a more constant enemy than persecution. The multiplication of it in endless refinements induced him to write his book against heresies, which must have been at that time a very seasonable work. His vigor and charity also in composing the insignificant disputes about Easter are noticeable.

His labors in Gaul were doubtless of the most solid utility. Nor is it a small instance of the humility and charity of this great man, accurately versed as he was in Grecian literature, that he took pains to learn the barbarous dialect of Gaul

conformed himself to the rustic manners of an illiterate people, and renounced the politeness and elegant traits of his own country, for the love of souls. Rare fruit of christian charity!

Gregory of Tours, and the ancient martyrologists, inform us, that after several torments, Irenæus was put to death, and together with him, almost all the christians of the populous city of Lyons, whose numbers could not be reckoned, so that the streets flowed with the blood of christians.

His book of heresies is nearly the whole of his writings that have escaped the injuries of time. His assiduity and penetration are equally remarkable in analyzing and dissecting all the fanciful schemes with which heretics had disgraced the christian name.

It is easy to see that his views of the gospel are in the same style as those of Justin, whom he quotes, and with whose works he appears to have been acquainted.

There is not much of pathetic, practical, or experimental religion in the work. The author's plan, which led him to keep up a constant attention to speculative errors, did not admit it. Yet there is every where so serious and grave a spirit, and now and then such displays of godliness, as show him very capable of writing what might have been singularly useful to the church in all ages.

He was evidently distinguished for the sobriety of his practical, christian spirit,—possessed of a peculiarly sound and discriminating tact in determining what was of practical moment in all doctrines, profoundly penetrated with a sense of the grandeur of God's works and of the limited compass of human understanding,—perseveringly opposes the humility of knowledge to the arrogant pretensions of Gnostic speculation, and forms the link of connection betwixt the church of Asia Minor and that of Rome,—representing in himself what was common to both.

CHAPTER V.

Tertullian.

HIS PROFESSION; BECOMES ASSOCIATED WITH MONTANISM; HIS WRITINGS AND CHARACTER.

TERTULLIAN was born, probably at Carthage, in the later times of the second century. His father was a centurion in the service of the pro-consul at Carthage. He was, at first, an advocate, or perhaps a rhetorician; nor did he embrace christianity until he had arrived at the age of manhood. He then obtained, if Jerome's account is correct, the office of presbyter; whether at Rome or at Carthage is, however, doubtful. The latter place is, in itself, the most probable; since in different writings, composed at different times, he discourses like one who was settled in Carthage; though the reports of Eusebius and Jerome speak for the former. The words of Eusebius do not, indeed, directly say that when a christian he took an important place in the Roman church; but according to the connection, may very well mean, that before his conversion to christianity, he stood in high repute at Rome as a juris-consul. We might then, to be sure, still infer, that, if he lived at Rome when a heathen, and enjoyed there so high a reputation, it is also probable that he was there first clothed with a spiritual office.

He became more or less identified with Montanism, a new theory of the times, a sort of one-sided super-naturalism; his conversion to which may be satisfactorily explained, from its affinity with the original bent of his mind and feelings.

The civilization of his times proceeded from the difference between the two great individualities of national character—the Greek and the Roman. In the Greek predominated the activity of the intellect—the scientific, speculative element.

The Roman character, on the other hand, was less mobile, and as in its spirit, the practical church interest was so

absorbing as to leave no room for the scientific, the west was in want of an organ whereby the spirit which prevailed there could scientifically express itself. Such an organ was supplied by the church of North Africa in Tertullian—a man who united in himself the elements of the Roman and of the Carthaginian character. Wanting the chaste sobriety of mind for which Ireænus was distinguished, though a foe to speculation, he could not resist the impulses of a profoundly speculative intellect; and to the devout practically christian element he united a speculative one,—destitute, however, of the regular form,—which continued for a long time to operate through various intermediate agencies in the western church, until it finally impregnated the mind of that great teacher of centuries, Augustin, in whom Tertullian once more appears under a transfigured form.

A great impression was made on his peculiar temperament by the remarkable phenomenon which sprung out of the very midst of the spiritual tendency of Asia Minor, viz.:—an opposition to the speculative caprice of the times, and a faithful seeking to preserve and hold fast the peculiar, fundamental doctrines of christianity, so as to secure them against all corruptions.

As this forms an essential element in his peculiar cast of mind, so it was by him that the principles which lie at the basis of Montanism were systematically determined, and thereby made to have an influence on the history of western theology.

Among the many ideas of this sect was this one;—that there were certain seasons or epochs, of the out-pouring of the Holy Ghost, through which the progressive development of the church was to be promoted; a new momentum superadded to its ordinary, regular course of development, and designed to complete what was lacking in it. In receiving this principle, and looking round for arguments in support of it, Tertullian endeavored to show the necessity of some such progressive development of the church, by pointing to a law running through all the works of God in the kingdoms of nature and of grace.

"In the works of grace," said he, "as in the works of nature, which proceed from the same Creator, every thing unfolds itself by certain successive steps. From the seed-kernel shoots forth first the plant; then comes the blossom, and finally this becomes the fruit, which itself arrives at maturity only by degrees. So the kingdom of righteousness unfolds itself by certain stages. In the first place, there was the fear of God awakened by the voice of nature, without a revealed law, (the patriarchal religion;) next followed the stage of childhood under the law and the prophets; then that of youth under the gospel; and at length the unfolding of the spiritual life to the ripeness of manhood through the new out-pouring of the Holy Ghost, connected with the appearance of Montanus—through the new instructions of the promised Paraclete."

It is a question difficult to determine, whether Tertullian always remained in the same connection with the Montanistic party, or whether, at some later period, he again inclined more to the Catholic church, and endeavored to strike out a middle path between the two parties.

The reports of Augustin and of Prædestinatus as well as the account given by the latter of a Montanistic work of his, in which he labors to diminish the number of controverted points between the two parties, favor indeed the latter supposition; and on this hypothesis many writings of Tertullian which are moderately Montanistic, or which merely border on such views, might be assigned to a different period of his life.

These accounts, however, are not sufficiently worthy of credit. From the disposition of the man, it may easily be conceived, that he would persevere in the mode of thinking he had once shaped out for himself, and only become the more obstinate by opposition.

It is said that he left the party, and formed a sect of his own, called "Tertullianists," who continued in Africa till Augustin's time, by whose labors their existence as a sect was brought to a close. This, however, furnishes no evidence in favor of the supposition; for it is possible that this

sect, holding to the peculiar opinions of Tertullian, had been formed at a later period, when separated from the correspondence with the Montanistic churches in Asia.

The writings of this man run through the widest range of topics relating to christian doctrine and to christian life; and it is here particularly important to distinguish those of his works which bear the stamp of Montanism, from those in which there are no traces of that error.

They had manifestly an important influence on the development of Cyprian as a doctrinal writer. Jerome states, after a tradition which was said to have come from a secretary of Cyprian, that the latter was in the habit of reading something daily from the writings of Tertullian, whom he was accustomed to call emphatically the *Teacher*. He has one work called "His Apology," in which his eloquence and argumentative powers appear most conspicuous. It exhibits a beautiful view of the manners and spirit of the christians of his time. We give a single quotation, which may serve to illustrate the subject, and show what real christianity does for men.

"We pray," says he, "for the safety of the emperors to the eternal God, the true, the living God, whom emperors themselves would desire to be propitious to them above all others who are called gods. We, looking up to heaven with outstretched hands, because they are harmless; with naked head, because we are not ashamed; without a prompter, because we pray from the heart, constantly pray for all emperors, that they may have a long life, a secure empire, a safe house, strong armies, a faithful senate, a well-moralized people, a quiet state of the world, whatever Cæsar would wish for himself in his public and private capacity. I can not solicit these things from any other than from Him from whom, I know, I shall obtain them, because He alone can do these things, and I am he who may expect them of Him, being His servant, who worship Him alone, and lose my life in His service. Thus, then, let the hoofs pierce us, while our hands are stretched out to God, let crosses suspend us, let fires consume us, let swords pierce our breasts, let wild beasts

trample on us,—a praying christian is in a frame for enduring any thing."

From this one may form an idea of the purity, integrity, heavenly-mindedness, and passiveness under injuries, for which the first christians were so justly renowned.

Tertullian presents claims to attention, both as the first representative of the theological tendency in the North African church, and as a representative of the Montanistic mode of thinking. He was a man of an ardent and profound spirit, of warm and deep feelings; inclined to give himself up, with his whole soul and strength, to the object of his love, and sternly to repel every thing that was foreign from this. He possessed rich and various stores of knowledge, which had been accumulated, however, at random, and without scientific arrangement. His profoundness of thought was not united with logical clearness and sobriety; an ardent, unbridled imagination, moving in a world of sensuous images, governed him. His fiery and positive disposition, and his previous training as an advocate or rhetorician, easily impelled him, especially in controversy, to rhetorical exaggerations. When he defended a cause, of whose truth he was convinced, we often see in him the advocate, whose sole anxiety is to collect together all the arguments which can help his case, it matters not whether they are true arguments, or only plausible sophisms; and in such cases, the very exuberance of his wit sometimes leads him astray from the simple feeling of truth.

What must render this man a phenomenon presenting special claims to the attention of the christian historian, is the fact that christianity is the inspiring soul of his life and thoughts; that out of christianity an entirely new and rich inner world developed itself to his mind: but the leaven of christianity had first to penetrate through and completely refine that fiery, bold, and withal rugged nature. We find new wine in an old bottle; and the tang which it has contracted there, may easily embarrass the inexperienced judge. He often had more within him than he was able to express; the overflowing mind was at a loss for suitable forms of

phraseology. He had to *create* a language for the new spiritual matter,—and that out of the rude Punic Latin,—without the aid of a logical and grammatical education, and as he was hurried along in the current of thoughts and feelings by his ardent nature.

And hence this great church-teacher, who unites great gifts with great failings, has been so often misconceived by those who could form no friendship with the spirit which dwelt in so ungainly a form.

He seems to have partaken somewhat of the stoical nature, having little of that *sympathy* for the weak, which forms a beautiful part of the christian character.

He was of great natural fortitude himself, and most probably of great strength of body, as he lived to an advanced age.

On the manner of his death the historian is silent, but his life is sufficient to show that he took large pains in supporting what he took to be religion, and ever meant to serve God.

CHAPTER VI.

Pantænus.

PECULIAR PHILOSOPHY; LABORS IN INDIA; CHRISTIAN CHARACTER.

ONE of the most respectable cities within the precincts of the Roman empire was Alexandria, the metropolis of Egypt.

Here the gospel had been planted by Mark, and from the considerable success which had attended it, in most capital towns, it is probable that many were converted. But of the first pastors of this church, and of the work of God among them, we have no account. Our most distinct information begins with what is evil. The platonic philosophers ruled the taste of this city, which piqued itself on its superior erudition. Ammonias Sacas had reduced there

the notions of the learned into a system, which intended to embrace all sorts of sentiments, and his successors for several ages followed his plan.

We are told that from Mark's time, a christian catechetical school was supported here. Whether it be so or not, Pantænus is the first master of it of whom we have any account.

He figured in the last half of the second century, and was called the "*learned Alexandrian teacher.*"

It would seem from a passage of Eusebius that he was a Hebrew by descent.

He had by tradition the true doctrine, received from Peter, James, John and Paul; and no doubt he deserved this testimony, notwithstanding the unhappy mixture of philosophy which he imbibed in this region.

For he was very much addicted to the sect of the Stoics, a sort of romantic pretenders to perfection, which doctrine flattered human pride, but was surely ill adapted to our natural imbecility, and the views of innate depravity.

The combination of this with christianity must have debased the Divine doctrine very much in the system of Pantænus; and, though his instructions clouded the light of the gospel among those who were disposed implicitly to follow his dictates, yet it is not improbable but that many of the simple and illiterate christians there might happily escape the infection, and preserve, unadulterated, the genuine simplicity of the faith of Christ. The bait of reasoning pride lies more in the way of the learned; and, in all ages, they are more prone to snatch at it.

Pantænus always retained the title of the stoic philosopher, after he had been admitted to eminent employments in the christian church. For ten years he laboriously discharged the office of catechist, and freely taught all that desired him, whereas the school of his predecessors had been more private.

Some Indian ambassadors, (from what part of India they came it is not easy to determine,) entreated Demetrius, then bishop of Alexandria, to send them some worthy person to preach the faith in their country. Pantænus was fixed on as the person, and the hardships he must have endured in it

were doubtless great. But there were at that time many evangelists, who had the apostolical spirit to propagate the faith at the hazard of their lives.

And as Pantænus very freely complied with this call, we have here one of the best proofs of his being possessed of the spirit of the gospel. His labors among ignorant Indians, where neither fame, nor ease, nor profit were attainable, appear much more substantial proofs of his godliness than his catechetical employments at Alexandria could be. The former would oblige him to attend chiefly to christian fundamentals, and could afford little opportunity of indulging the philosophic spirit.

We are told he found in India the gospel of Matthew, which had been carried thither by the apostle, Bartholomew, who had first preached amongst them. Doubt, however, exists as to the truth of this.

Of the particular success of his labors, we have no account; but he lived to return to Alexandria, and resumed his catechetical office. He died not long after the commencement of the third century. He used to instruct more by word than by writing. Some commentaries on the Scriptures are all that are mentioned as his, and of them not a fragment remains.

Candor requires us to look on this man as a sincere christian, whose fruitfulness was yet very much checked by that very philosophy for which Eusebius so highly commends him. A blasting wind it surely was, but it did not entirely destroy christian vegetation in all whom it infected.

But the christian reader is prepared to expect a declension in Divine things, in the state of the church before us.

CHAPTER VII.

Clemens Alexandrinus.

SUCCEEDS PANTÆNUS; HIS WRITINGS THE INDEX OF HIS MIND; QUOTATIONS FROM HIS WORKS.

THIS man was, by his own confession, a scholar of Pantænus, and of the same philosophical cast of mind. He was of the eclectic sect. It is sincerely to be regretted that Clemens had any acquaintance with them; so far as he mixed christianity with their notions, so far he tarnished it, and by his zeal, activity, learning, and reputation, at the same time that he taught many, he clouded the light of the gospel among those, who yet in fundamentals, were profited by his instruction.

He describes himself thus: "I espouse not this or that philosophy; not the stoic, nor the platonic, nor the epicurean, nor that of Aristotle; but whatever any of these sects have said, that was fit and just, that taught righteousness with a Divine and religious knowledge, selecting all this, I call it philosophy."

He succeeded his master Pantænus in the catechetical school, and under him were reared the famous Origen, Alexander, bishop of Jerusalem, and other eminent men.

Besides this office, he was made presbyter in the church of Alexandria. During the persecution under Severus, most probably, he visited the east, and had a peculiar intimacy with Alexander, the bishop. He appears to have been a holy man; and suffered imprisonment for the faith, and in that situation wrote a letter to the church of Antioch, which was carried by Clemens.

Something of the spirit of christianity appears in the fragments of this letter: "Alexander, a servant of God, and a prisoner of Jesus Christ, to the blessed church at Antioch, in the Lord, greeting. Our Lord has made my bonds, in

this time of my imprisonment, light and easy to me; while I understood that Asclepiades, a person admirably qualified by his eminency in the faith, was, by Divine providence, become bishop of your holy church of Antioch. These letters, brethren, I have sent by Clemens, the blessed presbyter, a man of approved integrity, whom ye both do already and shall still further know; who having been here with us according to the good will of God, hath much established and augmented the church of Christ."

From Jerusalem Clemens went to Antioch, and afterward returned to his charge at Alexandria.

The time of his death is uncertain.

The philosphy, to which he was so much addicted, would naturally darken his views of some of the most precious truths of the gospel; particularly the doctrine of justification by faith in Jesus Christ will always suffer from this connection, the philosophers knowing no righteousness but what is infused.

There is doubtless good proof of the solid piety of this learned man.

Little is known of his life. But a more complete idea may be formed of his religious taste and spirit, by his writings.

His "exhortations to the Gentiles," is a discourse written to convert the pagans from their religion, and persuade them to embrace that of Jesus Christ. In the beginning of it he shows what difference there is between the design of Christ, and that of Orpheus, and those ancient musicians who were the first authors of idolatry, by telling us that these drew in men by their singing and the sweetness of their music, to render them miserable slaves to idols, and to make them like the very stones whom they adored.

"Whereas Jesus Christ, who from all eternity was the word of God, always had a compassionate tenderness for men, and at last took their nature upon him, to free them from the slavery of demons, to open the eyes of the blind, and the ears of the deaf, to guide their feet in the way of righteousness, to deliver them from death and hell, and to bestow on them everlasting life, and to put them into a

EXTERIOR OF THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHERE, JERUSALEM.

capacity of living an heavenly life here upon earth; and, lastly, that God made himself man to teach man to be like unto God."

He shows them, that eternal salvation can not otherwise be obtained or expected; and that eternal torments can not otherwise be avoided, but by believing in Jesus Christ, and by living conformably to his laws.

"If you were permitted," says he, "to purchase eternal salvation, what would you not give for it? And now you may obtain it by faith and love; there is nothing that can hinder you from acquiring it, neither poverty, nor misery, nor old age, nor any state of life. Believe, therefore, in one God, who is God and man, and receive eternal salvation for a recompense. Seek God, and you shall live forever."

The candid christian sees that the fundamentals of the gospel are here laid down, as one might expect in a discourse of this nature, though not in the clearest and happiest manner.

In his "Pedagogue," he describes "the *word incarnate* as the instructor of men; that he performs his functions by forgiving our sins, as he is God, and by instructing us, as he is man, with great sweetness and love; though he equally instructs all sorts, because all are children in one sense. Yet we must look on christian doctrines as childish and contemptible; on the contrary, the quality of children, which they receive in regeneration, renders them perfect in the knowledge of Divine things, by delivering them from sins by grace, and enlightening them with the illumination of faith; so that we are at the same time both children and men; and the milk with which we are nourished, being both the word and will of God, is very solid and substantial nourishment."

Here seem to be some of his best ideas of christianity.

Clemens was not a man of systematic mind. Many heterogeneous elements and ideas, which he had received in his various intercourse with different minds, were brought together in him—a fact which occasionally becomes evident in his "Stromata;" a work, the design of which is, as he himself testifies, to bring together a chaotic assemblage of truth

and error out of the Greek philosophers and the systems of the christian sects, in connection with fragments of the true christianity. Each should find out for himself what suited his case; it was his aim to excite rather than to teach; and he often purposely only hinted at the truth, where he might fear to give offense to *the believers* who were as yet incapable of comprehending his ideas.

The eighth book of this work is wanting, for as early as the times of Photius it was lost.

In this work he speaks with his usual partiality in favor of philosophy, and shows the effect his regard for it had on his own mind, by saying that *faith* is God's gift, but so as to depend on our own free will.

His account of the perfect christian, whom he calls Gnosticus, is sullied by stoical rhapsodies: "He is never angry, and nothing affects him; because he always loves God, and will look upon that time as lost which he is obliged to spend in receiving nourishment. He is employed in continual and mental prayer. He is mild, affable, patient, but at the same time so rigid as not to be tempted, neither giving way to pleasure or pain."

Many fragmentary ideas, sketched with masterly power, and containing the germs of a thorough, systematic theological system, lie scattered in his works, amidst a profusion of vain and hollow speculations.

Withal is seen the baneful effect of mixing things which will not incorporate,—human invention with christian truth; so that this writer, learned, laborious, and ingenious, as he was, in the subject of real christian knowledge, and in the experience of Divine things, according to the light of Scripture, may seem to be far exceeded by many obscure and illiterate persons at this day.

CHAPTER VIII.

Cyprian.

HISTORY OF HIS CONVERSION; HEAVENLY-MINDEDNESS; CONDUCT IN RETIREMENT; ZEAL FOR THE CHURCH; SUFFERS MARTYRDOM UNDER THE REIGN OF VALERIAN.

CYPRIAN, of the third century, was a star of the first magnitude in his time. Very little distinct information is to be gathered from his biographer, Pontius; but his own letters are extant, and these exhibit what is of the greatest moment. They are, in truth, a valuable treasure of ecclesiastical history; the spirit, taste, discipline and habits of the times among christians, are strongly delineated; nor have we in all this century any account to be compared with them.

He was a professor of oratory in the city of Carthage, and a man of wealth, quality, and dignity. Cecilius, a Carthaginian presbyter, had the felicity, under God, to conduct him to the knowledge of Christ; and in his gratitude, Cyprian afterward assumed the prænomen of Cecilius. His conversion was about the year 246, two years before he was chosen bishop of Carthage. About thirteen years was the whole scene of his christian life. But God can do great things in a little time, or to speak more nervously with the sacred writer, "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years."

He did not proceed by slow, painful steps of argumentation, but seems to have been led on with vast rapidity by the effectual operation of the Divine Spirit, and happily, in a great measure at least, to have escaped the shoals and quicksands of false learning and self-conceit, which so much tarnished the character of many of his eastern brethren. Faith and love seem in native simplicity to have possessed him when an early convert, and he seems to have been animated by a spirit at once simple, zealous, and intelligent.

It was with much reluctance he observed the designs of the people to choose him for their bishop. He retired to avoid their solicitations, his house was besieged, and his retreat rendered impossible. He yielded at length to accept of the painful preëminence, for so he soon found it. Yet five presbyters were enemies to his exaltation, but his lenity, patience, and benevolence toward them was remarked by all.

It was no feigned virtue that advanced him thus in the eyes of the people. The love of Christ evidently preponderated in him above all secular considerations.

He saw with pity the poor of the flock, and he knew no method so proper of employing the unrighteous mammon, as to relieve their distress. He sold whole estates for their benefit. His wife opposed his christian spirit of liberality in vain. The widow, the orphan, and the poor, found in him a sympathizing benefactor continually. The presbyter, Cecilius, must have beheld with delight, the growing virtues of his pupil, and, dying, recommended to his care his wife and children.

Pontius tells us that he did many things before he was chosen bishop. Indeed, a spirit like his must be employed. But he does not oblige us with the communication of any of his works. His letter to Donatus may safely be placed within this period, as it is said to be his first work.

Part of this, as it will illustrate his conversion, and show the spirit of a man penetrated with Divine love, and lately recovered from the idolatry of the world, well deserves notice.

"I find your whole care and concern," he says, "at present is for conversion; you look at me, and expect from me in your affection, what I am afraid I can not by any means answer. Small fruits must be expected from my meanness; yet I will attempt, for the subject matter is on my side.

"Let plausible arts of ambition be used in courts; but when we speak of the Lord God, plainness and sincerity, not the powers of eloquence, should be used. Hear, then, things not eloquent, but strong; not courtly, but rude; yet proper to celebrate the Divine goodness. Hear, then, what is felt before it is learnt, and is not collected by a long course

of speculation, but is imbibed by the soul, by the compendium of grace ripening her as at once.

"While I lay in darkness and the night of paganism, and when I fluctuated, uncertain and dubious with wandering steps in the sea of a tempestuous age, ignorant of my own life, alienated from light and truth, it appeared to me a harsh and difficult thing, as my manners then were, to obtain what Divine grace had promised, that a man should be born again; and that, being animated with the love of regeneration by a new life, he should strip himself of what he was before, and though the body remained the same, he should in his mind become altogether a new creature. How can so great a change be possible, said I, that a man should suddenly and at once put off what nature and habit have confirmed in him?

"But after the new birth had made me a new creature indeed, immediately and in an amazing manner dubious things began to be cleared up, things once shut to be opened, dark things to shine forth; what before seemed difficult, now appeared feasible, and that was now evidently practicable, which had been deemed impossible.

"Of God it is,—of God, I say, even all that we can do; thence we live, thence we have strength, and thence conceive and assume all vigor.

"What a power, what an energy, is this!"

Thus do we see the essential doctrines of justification and regeneration, by Divine grace, not only believed, but experienced, by this zealous African. The difference between mere human and Divine teaching is rendered more striking by such cases. With no great furniture of learning, it was his happiness to know little, if any thing, of the then reigning philosophy. We see a man of business and the world rising at once a Phœnix in the church, no extraordinary theologian, in point of accurate knowledge, yet an useful, practical divine, an accomplished pastor, flaming with the love of God and of souls, and with unremitted activity spending and being spent for Christ Jesus.

Hear his words of counsel: "Do you, whom the heavenly

warfare hath marked for Divine service, only preserve, untainted and sober, your christian course by the virtues of religion. Let prayer or reading be your assiduons employment; one while speak with God, another while hear him speak to you; let him instruct you by his precepts, let him regulate you; whom he hath made rich, none shall make poor. There can be no penury to him whose heart has once been fattened with celestial marrow." In this, one sees a christian alive, possessed of some rich portion of that effusion of the Holy Ghost, which, from the apostles' days, still exhibited Christ Jesus, and fitted by experience to communicate to others the real gospel, and to be an happy instrument of guiding souls to that rest which remains for the people of God.

How Cyprian conducted himself in his bishopric, who is sufficient to relate? says Pontius, in the fullness of his admiration. Some particular account, however, might have been expected from one who had such large opportunity of information. One thing he notices of his external appearance. His looks had the due mixture of gravity and cheerfulness, so that it was doubtful whether he was more worthy of love or of reverence. His dress also was correspondent to his looks; he had renounced the secular pomp to which his rank in life entitled him, yet he avoided affected penury,—conduct that might be expected from one of his piety and good sense.

While Cyprian was laboring to recover the spirit of godliness among the Africans, which long peace had corrupted, Philip was slain, and succeeded by Decius.

His enmity to the former emperor conspired with his Pagan prejudices to bring on the most dreadful persecution which the church had yet experienced. It was evident that nothing less than the destruction of the christian name was intended.

Cyprian was earnest, in every possible way, in encouraging the christians to hold on their way, though it led them to the fires of martyrdom.

But Carthage soon became an unsafe scene to Cyprian

himself. By repeated suffrages of the people, at the theatre, he was demanded to be taken and given to the lions; and it behooved him immediately either to retire into a place of safety, or to expect the crown of martyrdom.

He knew the liberty which his Divine Master had given to his people of fleeing, when they were persecuted in one city, to another; and he embraced it. Nay, he seems scarce to have thought it lawful to do otherwise. Even the last state of his martyrdom evinces this. His manner of enduring it when it providentially was brought on him, sufficiently clears him of all suspicion of pusillanimity. To unite such seemingly opposite things as discretion and fortitude, each in a very high degree, is a sure characteristic of greatness in a christian; it is grace in its highest exercise.

Behold him now safe, under God, from the arm of persecution, in retirement for the space of two years.

Nor was he ever more active than in his retreat. To those who, through fear, abandoned the faith, he wrote letters, inciting them to repentance; and to those who remained firm, suffering in consequence, he addressed epistles of encouragement and consolation.

But so keenly was the mind of Cyprian set on heavenly things, and so completely lifted up above the world, that he ardently exulted and triumphed in those scenes of horror. He describes the martyrs and confessors as wiping away the tears of the church, while she was bewailing the ruins of her sons.

Even Christ himself he describes as looking down with complaisancy, fighting and conquering in his servants, giving to believers as much strength as the receiver thinks he can receive.

In addition to other evils, the providence of God now thought fit to exercise the mind of Cyprian with a calamity, one of the worst to a lover of peace and charity, the rise of a schism* in his church at Carthage. He immediately wrote

* This schism was owing to one Felicissumus in the church of Carthage, who had long been a secret enemy of the bishop, and a person of very exceptionable character. Growing insolent, and taking advantage of Cyprian's absence,

to them, exhorting them to unity and constancy in the good cause.

We subjoin the following passage, as indicative of his feeling in being absented from them at such a time: "My banishment of two years it seems was not sufficient, my mournful separation from your presence, my constant grief and perpetual lamentation, and my tears flowing day and night, because the pastor whom you chose, with so much love and zeal, could not salute or embrace you. To my distressed spirit a still greater evil is added, that in so great a solicitude I can not come over to you."

At length, however, he ventured from his retreat and returned to Carthage, where his christian authority was restored, and the matter settled, which had caused him so much disquietude.

Thus did it please God to make use of the vigor and perseverance of Cyprian in recovering the church from a state of most deplorable declension.

Encouraged with the success of his pacific labors at home, he endeavored to heal the breaches of Rome. It is evident that union was as much on his heart, for one place as another, because he considered Christ's body as one, nor were his labors here unattended with success.

After a short interval, the death of Decius procured the appointment of Gallus as his successor, and persecution was renewed.

It is no wonder that Cyprian, who had seen and known such dreadful devastations under the former, should be tempted to imagine the approach of Antichrist, the end of the world, and the day of judgment to be at hand. Sagacious and holy men are never more apt to be deceived than when they attempt to look into futurity. God hath made the present so much the exclusive object of our duty, that he

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whose return he speedily expected, as the persecution had nearly ceased at Carthage, set up in form an opposition to the bishop, and threatened those who would not communicate with him, and found means to unite a considerable party to himself. This division caused Cyprian much sorrow, and at his request, Felicissumus and his abettors were suspended from communion.

will scarce suffer any of his best and wisest servants to gain any credit, in conjecturing concerning the times and the seasons, which he hath put in his own power. "You ought to be well assured," said he, in an animating letter to the people of Thibasis, "that the day of affliction is at hand, and that the end of the world, and the time of Antichrist is near, that we may all stand prepared for the battle, and think only of the glory of eternal life, and the crown of christian confession.

But Cyprian was reserved beyond the life of Gallus, as well as Decius, for the use of the church, and faithfully did he continue his work.

In measures to promote the steadfastness of the church, and extend the knowledge of the truth, he was constantly active.

Tranquillity was restored, and a peace of three years given to the church, during which time they well nigh forgot their days of trial, and trusted in their own strength to stand strong.

As might be expected, the instability of human character conspired to bring about a change, and the former days of agitation and sorrow returned.

Cyprian, who had escaped two persecutions, was now made the victim of the third, though by slow degrees, and attended with circumstances of comparative lenity.

He was seized by the servants of Paternus, the pro-consul of Carthage, and brought into his council chamber. "The sacred emperors, Valerian and Gallienus," says Paternus, "have done me the honor to direct letters to me, in which they have decreed, that all men ought to adore the gods whom the Romans adore, and on pain of being slain with the sword.

"I have heard that you despise the worship of the gods, whence I advise you to consult for yourself, and honor them."

"I am a christian," replied the prelate, "and know no God but the one true God, who created heaven and earth, the sea, and things in them. This God we christians serve; to Him

we pray night and day for all men; and even for the emperors."

"You shall die the death of a malefactor, if you persevere in this inclination." "That is a good inclination which fears God," answered Cyprian, "and therefore must not be changed." "You must then, by the will of the princes, be banished."

"He is no exile," it was replied, "who has God in his heart, for the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof."

Paternus said, "Before you go, tell me where are your presbyters, who are said to be in this city."

With much presence of mind Cyprian reminded him of the edicts made by the best Roman princes against the practice of informers: "They ought not therefore to be discovered by me, but you may find them, and you yourselves do not approve of men offering themselves voluntarily to you." "I will make you discover them by torments." "By me," the intrepid bishop rejoined, "they shall not be discovered." "Our princes have ordered that christians hold no conventicles, and whoever breaks this rule, shall be put to death." "Do what you are ordered," Cyprian calmly replied.

Paternus, however, was not disposed to hurt the bishop. Most probable he respected the character of the man, which by this time must have been highly esteemed, through a shining series of good works in Africa. Having made some ineffectual attempts to work on his fears, he sent him into banishment to Curubis, a little town fifty miles from Carthage, situate by the sea, over against Sicily. The citizens treated him with great kindness, during his stay of eleven months, and he was repeatedly visited by christians. Here he served his Divine Master in good works, and Paternus in the interim died.

In the year 260, Cyprian returning from exile by permission, lived in a garden near Carthage, which was now providentially restored to him, though he had sold it at his first conversion. His liberal spirit would have inclined him once more to sell it for the relief of the needy, had he not feared to attract the envy of the persecutors.

Here he regulated the affairs of the church, and distributed what he had left; but while thus employed, two officers with soldiers came to seize him. They carried him in a chariot between them to a place called Sextus, six miles from Carthage, by the seaside, where the pro-consul lodged indisposed. The affair was deferred till the next day, and he was carried back to the lodgings of the chief of the officers, about the distance of a stadium from the prætorium. The news spread through Carthage; his celebrity, on account of his good works, drew prodigious crowds to the scene, not only of christians, but of infidels, who revered the virtue of the man.

The chief of the officers guarded him, but in a courteous manner; so that he ate with his friends, and had them about him as usual. The next day he was sent for by the pro consul, and went accordingly, attended by crowds of people.

The pro-consul not yet appearing, he was ordered to wait for him in a private place, where he sat down.

Being in a great perspiration, a soldier, who had been a christian, offered him a change of clothes. "Shall we," says Cyprian, "seek for a remedy for that which may last no longer than to-day?"

He was at length brought into the judgment hall, where the pro-consul sat. "Are you Thascius Cyprian?" "I am." "Are you he whom the christians call their bishop?" "I am." "Our princes have ordered you to worship the gods." "That I shall not do." "You will do better to consult your safety, and not despise the gods." "My safety and virtue is Christ the Lord, whom I desire to serve forever." "I pity your case," says the pro-consul; "and could wish to consult for you." "I do not wish," says the prelate, "that things should be otherwise with me, than that adoring my God, I may hasten to him with all the ardor of my soul; for the afflictions of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

The pro-consul now reddening with anger, says: "You haved lived sacrilegiously a long time, and have formed into a society men of an impious conspiracy, and have shown

yourself an enemy to the gods and their religion, and have not hearkened to the equitable counsels of our princes, but have ever been a father of the impious sect, and their ring-leader; you shall therefore be an example to the rest, and they shall learn their duty by your blood. Let Thascius Cyprian, who refuses to sacrifice to the gods, be put to death by the sword." "God be praised," said the martyr, and while they were leading him away, a multitude of the people followed and cried, "Let us die with our holy bishop."

A troop of soldiers attended him, and the officers marched on each side of him. They led him into a plain surrounded with trees, and many climbed up to the top of them to see him at a distance. Cyprian took off his mantle, and fell on his knees, worshiping his God.

The executioner being come, he ordered twenty-five golden denarii to be given him; he himself bound the napkin over his eyes, and a presbyter and deacon tied his hands for him; and the christians laid before him napkins and handkerchiefs to receive his blood. Then his head was cut off by the sword.

Thus, after an eventful and instructive period of about thirteen years since his conversion, after a variety of toils and exercises among friends, and open foes and nominal christians, by a death more gentle than commonly fell to the lot of martyrs, rested at length in Jesus, the magnanimous and charitable spirit of Cyprian of Carthage.

CHAPTER IX.

Gregory Thaumaturgus.

ENJOYS THE TUITION OF ORIGEN; ARDUOUS LABORS IN THE CAUSE OF CHRISTIANITY; EVANGELICAL CHARACTER.

HE was born at Neocæsarea, the metropolis of Cappadocia; his father, zealous for paganism, took care to educate him in idolatry and the learning of the Gentile world. He lost his father when he was fourteen years of age. His mother took care to complete his education, and that of his brother, Athenodorus, afterward a christian bishop, as well as himself.

He traveled to Alexandria to learn the platonic philosophy, where he was equally remarkable for strictness of life and close attention to his studies.

He afterward put himself under the tuition of the renowned Origen, who then taught at Cæsarea in Palestine, with his brother Athenodorus, and Firmilian, a Cappadocian gentleman, with whom he contracted an intimate friendship.

With Origen the two brothers continued five years, and were persuaded by him to study the Holy Scriptures; and no doubt is to be entertained, but that the most assiduous pains were urged by that zealous teacher to ground them in the belief of christianity.

On his departure he delivered an eloquent speech, in praise of Origen, before a numerous auditory, a testimony at once of his gratitude and powers of rhetoric.

There is still extant a letter written by Origen to him after he had left him, in which he exhorts him to apply his knowledge to the promotion of christianity. The best thing in it is, that he advises him to pray fervently for the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

Having returned to Neocæsarea, he gave himself much to retirement, and no doubt was in secret prepared and

disciplined for the important work to which he was soon after called. Neocæsarea was large and populous, but full of idolatry, the very seat of Satan, so that christianity scarce could gain any entrance into it. Phedimus, bishop of Amasea, a neighboring city, grieved to see its situation, and hoping much from the piety and capacity of young Gregory, took pains to engage him in the work of the ministry there. From pure modesty, he took pains to elude his designs, but was at length prevailed on to accept the charge.

The scene was arduous. He had a church to found, before he could govern it, there not being above seventeen professors of christianity there.

The vision, which his namesake of Nyssen tells of his receiving a creed from John the evangelist, and the Virgin Mary, of course, is not worthy of much credit. He seems to have been imposed on by the superstitious spirit, then too prevalent. But as he assures us the original, written with his own hand, was preserved in the church of Neocæsarea in his time, and this is a matter of fact of which any person might judge; as the creed itself contains nothing but what is very agreeable to the language of the fathers of the third century, and we have already seen the exact pains which they took in guarding sacred doctrines against heresies, it is to be apprehended that it is really his; though when one has considered it, he will not be surprised at the industry with which in our times its credit has been impeached. And the whole will deserve to be set down at length, because the orthodoxy of Gregory has been ureasonably called in question, against the express testimony of Eusebius, who, he represents as one of the opposers of Paul of Samosata, at the first council.

"There is one God the Father of the living word, of the subsisting wisdom and power, and of the eternal express Image; perfect, the Father of the perfect, the Father of the only-begotten Son.

"One Lord alone, of alone, God of God, the character and image of the Deity, the energetic Word, the Wisdom comprehensive of the system of the universe, and the Power

that made all creation, the true Son of the true Father, the Invisible of the invisible, the Incorruptible of the incorruptible, the Immortal of the immortal, the Eternal of the eternal; and one Holy Ghost, having his subsistence of God, manifested through the Son to men, the image of the Son, the perfect life of the perfect, the source of life, the holy fountain, sanctification, and the supplier of sanctification, in whom is manifested God the Father, who is above all and in all, and God the Son, who is through all; a perfect Trinity, in glory, eternity, and kingdom, not separated, not divided."

Notwithstanding the prejudices which his idolatrous countrymen must have had against him, Musonius, a person of consequence in the city, received him, and in a very little time his preaching was attented with so great success that he had a numerous congregation. The situation of Gregory, so like that of the primitive christian preachers, in the midst of idolatry, renders it exceedingly probable that he was, as they were, favored with miraculous gifts; for these the Lord bestowed in abundance, where the name of Jesus had as yet gained no admission; and it is certain that miracles had not ceased in the church.

Gregory Nyssen lived himself within less than a hundred years after our Gregory; and both he and his brother, the famous Basil, speak of his miracles without the least doubt.

Their aged grandmother, Macrina, who taught them in their youth, had in her younger years been a hearer of Gregory.

Basil particularly observes that she told them the very words which she had heard from him, and assures us that the Gentiles, on account of the miracles which he performed, used to call him a second Moses.

The existence of his miraculous powers, with reasonable persons, seems then unquestionable.

It is only to be regretted that the few particular instances which have come down to us are not the best chosen; but that he cured the sick, healed the diseased, and expelled devils, and that thus God wrought by him for the good of

souls, and to pave the way for the propagation of the gospel, as it is in itself very credible, so has it the testimony of men worthy to be believed.

He continued successfully employed at his native place, till the persecution of Decius. Swords and axes, fire, wild beasts, stakes and engines to distend the limbs, iron chains made red hot, frames of timber set up straight, in which the bodies of the tortured were racked with nails which tore off the flesh. Relations, in the most unnatural manner, betrayed one another; the woods were full of vagabonds, the towns were empty, and private houses, deprived of their christian inhabitants, became gaols for the reception of prisoners, the public prisons not sufficing for that purpose.

In this terrible situation of things, Gregory considered that his new converts could scarce be strong enough to stand their ground and be faithful, advised them to flee, and to encourage them in it, he set them the example. Many of his people suffered, but God restored them at length to peace, and Gregory again returned to exhilarate their minds with his pastoral labors.

In the reign of Gallienus, the christians suffered extremely from the ravages of barbarous nations, which gave occasion to Gregory's Canonical Epistle, still extant, in which rules of a wholesome, penitential, and disciplinarian nature are delivered.

The last service of his which is recorded, is the part which he took in the first council concerning Paul of Samosata. He died not long after. A little before his death, he made a strict inquiry whether there were any in the city and neighborhood still strangers to christianity.

Being told there were about seventeen in all, he sighed, and lifting up his eyes to heaven, appealed to God how much it troubled him that any of his fellow townsmen should remain unacquainted with salvation; yet that his thankfulness was due to God, that when at first he had found only seventeen christians, he had left only seventeen idolaters. Having prayed for the conversion of infidels, and the edification of the faithful, he peaceably gave up his soul to God.

He was an evangelical man in his whole life, as Basil says. In his devotion he showed the greatest reverence. Zealous he was against all corruptions, and Sabellianism, which long after in Basil's time reared up its head, was, he tells us, silenced by the remembrance of what he had taught and left among them.

On the whole, it is to be regretted that antiquity has left us such scanty memorials of a man so much honored of God, so eminently holy, and little inferior in utility among mankind, to any from the apostles' days to his own times.

CHAPTER X.

Basil of Cæsarea.

SUPERIOR ATTAINMENTS IN LEARNING; EFFORTS AS PASTOR; DEATH HASTENED BY AUSTERITY.

BASIL, surnamed the *great*, on account of his learning and piety, was descended from christian ancestors, who suffered much during the Dioclesian persecution. His grandmother, Macrina, herself a confessor for the faith of Christ, and a disciple of Gregory Thaumaturgus, was eminently useful to him, in superintending his education, and fixing his principles. After a strict domestic education in Cappadocia, his native country, he traveled for improvement in knowledge, according to the custom of those whose circumstances enabled them to bear the expense, and came to Athens.

Here he met with Gregory Nazianzen, with whom he had a cordial intimacy. At length, leaving him there, he came to Constantinople, and put himself under the care of the famous Libanius. It is certain, that he was possessed of all the secular learning of the age; and, if he had chosen to give himself wholly to the world, he might have shone as much as superior parts, strong understanding and indefatigable industry, united, can effect.

But his mind was under a spiritual influence; he found an emptiness in the most refined enjoyments of literature; even Athens itself he called a vain felicity.

He was led to seek for food for his soul, and, in conjunction with Gregory, he studied the works of Origen; and some monuments of their veneration for that learned father are still extant.

Julian the Apostate, had known him, when they studied together at Athens, and being now advanced to the empire, he invited him to his court. But the fear of God, and the love of heavenly things which undoubtedly predominated in the latter, suffered him not to give way to the temptation for a moment.

He wrote with christian sincerity to the emperor, and provoked him by his faithful rebukes; choosing rather to live in Cæsarea a despised christian, than to share in the honors and riches of the court, to which his uncommon endowments and abilities would have advanced him.

After some time, he lived in retirement at Neocæsarea, in Pontus, and, by his example, concurring with the spirit of the times, he not only drew over his friend Gregory but also great numbers to embrace a retired life, and to employ themselves in prayer, singing of psalms and devotional exercises. And here, these two friends formed the rules of monastic discipline, which were the basis of all those superstitious institutions, which afterward overran the church.

The want of a more evangelical view of doctrine, and of course, of that lively faith which would animate and enable the christian to live above the world, though in the midst of it, was, doubtless, the principal cause of the overflowing of this spirit among real good men in these times.

To flee from society seemed to them the only possible way to escape the pollutions of the world which they sincerely abhorred.

But he, who should, in these times, suspect the generality of monks of profligacy and hypocrisy would injure them much. On the contrary, the flower of the flock of Christ, in these days, is to be looked for among them.

If Basil was employed in founding monasteries in the neighboring parts, he also caused hospitals to be erected for the poor, and, as he had been ordained priest before he left Cæsarea, he was useful in preaching up and down the country. Returning after a time to his native home, he distinguished himself by inducing the rich to supply the necessities of the poor during a grievous famine; and all the world gave him credit both for his charity in relieving the distressed, and for his integrity in resisting the importunities of Valens, the Arian emperor.

The See of Cæsarea being vacant, the authority of the aged Gregory, Bishop of Nazianzum, the father of his friend, was sincerely exerted for his promotion; and to this See he was at length advanced, notwithstanding the opposition of the Arians. He was soon called to withstand the repeated attacks of Valens, and though he was in the utmost danger of being banished from his See, he remained immovable in the profession of the faith.

He found that the church, before his time, had been scandalously neglected in its discipline. Church officers, who were a disgrace to religion, ministered; and the country bishops ordained men without the knowledge of the bishop, and without any just examination; and many pressed into the ministry for secular reasons. It was reported that some were even guilty of selling the priesthood for money; the crime usually known as Simony.

Basil reminded his clergy of the strictness of the primitive discipline, and of the care formerly exercised by the presbyters and deacons in examining the lives and manners of the persons to be ordained; and he made earnest attempts to revive the laudable customs, inveighing against Simony as most detestable.

It would be tedious to describe the divers contests in which he was engaged. Calumny, malice and the domineering power of Arianism afflicted him with various trials, in which his patience was unwearied; and, as his body became enfeebled by increasing infirmities, his mind seems to have collected more vigor. Finding himself rapidly declining, after he had

governed the church eight years and some months, he ordained some of his followers, and then was obliged to take to his bed. The people flocked about his house, sensible of the value of such a pastor. He discoursed piously to those who were about him, for a time, and sealed his last breath with the ejaculation, "Into thine hands I commend my spirit."

It is much to be lamented that a man so sincerely pious, so profoundly learned, and of so elegant and accomplished a genius, should have suffered so much, both in mind and body, from the monastic spirit. But his excessive austerities broke his constitution, and left him for years in a very imperfect state of health. He died in the year 379.

His doctrine appears, from his works, to be too much clouded with self-righteous and superstitious mixtures to contribute materially to the instruction and consolation of sincere souls, though it is evident that he revered the influences of the Holy Spirit, and placed his hope of salvation in Christ Jesus.

On one subject,—the love of heavenly things in opposition to earthly,—he excelled, both in precept and example.

In this the power of grace appeared in the man through life; and even the whole system of his errors in Divinity was connected with it. The very principle of the Ascetic life was to him a supreme desire to live above the world.

Truly, he was a man of piety, and he has gained his appropriate reward.

CHAPTER XI.

Ambrose.

RELUCTANCE TO ACCEPT THE OFFICE OF BISHOP; PERSECUTION BY JUSTINA; ARDUOUS LABORS IN HIS CALLING; EARLY DEATH.

AMBROSE succeeded Arian Auxentius at Milan, who died in the year 374. He was born about the year 333, while his father was the emperor's lieutenant in France. He was the youngest of three children, Marcellina and Satyrus being born before him. After his father's decease, his mother with the family returned to Rome, where he made himself master of all the learning that Greece and Latium could afford; at the same time his sister instructed him with much success in the principles of godliness.

Being grown to maturity, he pleaded causes with so much dexterity, that he was soon taken notice of by Anicius Probus, prætorian prefect of Italy, who made choice of him to be of his council; and having authority to appoint governors to several provinces, when he gave a commission to him, he said, "Go and govern more like a bishop than a judge." He resided in this office at Milan for five years, and was renowned for prudence and justice, when one of those sudden turns of Providence, which are so conspicuous in the lives of many persons of eminent godliness, threw him into a course of life extremely different from the former.

Auxentius, by artifice and dexterity, had imposed on Valentinian, and preserved his seat till his death in the year 374. Immediately the bishops of the province met together concerning the election of a successor.

The emperor sent for them, and told them that they, as men best acquainted with the sacred volume, ought to understand better than he the qualifications necessary for so important a station.

"Choose a man," said he, "fit to instruct by life, as well as by doctrine, and we ourselves will readily submit our sceptres to his counsels and direction, and as men obnoxious to human frailty, will receive his reproofs and admonitions as wholesome physic." The bishops besought him to nominate the person, but Valentinian was resolute in referring the determination to them, as fitter than himself to decide.

In the mean time factions were strong, and the Arian party vigorously labored to provide a successor worthy of Auxentius. The city was divided, every thing tended toward a tumult, the bishops were consulting, and Ambrose hearing of these things, hastened to the church of Milan, and exhorted the people to peace and submission to the laws. His speech being finished, an infant's voice was heard in the crowd, "Ambrose is bishop."

The hint was taken at once; the whole assembly cried out, "Ambrose shall be the man." The factions agreed immediately, and he whom secular pursuits had seemed to preclude from the notice of either party, was suddenly elected by universal consent.

Ambrose was astonished, and peremptorily refused; nor was any person ever more desirous to obtain the office of bishop, than he was to avoid it.

He even used methods which sound strange in our ears, and are by no means justifiable. By exercising severity on malefactors, and other unjust measures, he took pains to convince them that he was not that character of mildness and chastity which he undoubtedly was, and which all believed him to be.

The uncommon hypocrisy was, however, easily detected. Finding that it was in vain to stem the torrent, he stole out of Milan at midnight, but missing his way, and wandering all night, he found himself in the morning at the gate of Milan.

A guard was placed about his person, till the emperor's pleasure should be known; because his consent was necessary to part with a subject in office.

Valentinian sincerely consented; and the consent of

Ambrose himself alone was wanting. He again made his escape, and hid himself in the country house of a friend. A menacing edict of the emperor brought him again to Milan, because he dared not expose his friend to the resentment of the emperor. He yielded at length, and Valentinian gave thanks to God, that it had pleased him to make choice of the very person to take care of men's souls, whom he had himself before appointed to preside over their temporal concerns.

He received his general admonitions with reverence; and in particular, hearing him represent the faults of some in authority with great plainness, "I knew," said the emperor, "the honesty of your character before this time, yet I consented to your ordination; follow the Divine rules, and cure the maladies into which we are prone to fall."

Ambrose was then about thirty-four years old.

Immediately he gave to the church and to the poor all the gold and silver which he had. He gave also his lands to the church, reserving the annual income of them for the use of his sister, Marcellina. His family he committed to the care of his brother, Satyrus.

Thus disengaged from temporal concerns, he gave up himself wholly to the ministry. Having read little else than profane authors, he first applied himself to the study of the Scriptures. Whatever time he could spare from business, he devoted to reading; and this he continued to do after he had attained a good degree of knowledge. His public labors went hand in hand with his studies. He preached every Lord's day. Arianism, through his labors, was expelled from Italy.

There was a presbyter of Rome, one Simplician, a man of eminent learning and piety, whom he drew over to Milan, and under whose tuition he improved in theology. From him, as an instrument, it pleased God successively to convey both to Ambrose and Augustine that fire of Divine love and genuine simplicity in religion, which had very much decayed since the days of Cyprian; and in this slow, but effectual method, the Lord was preparing the way for another great effusion of his Spirit. Ambrose now gave himself wholly

to the work of the Lord, and restored purity of doctrine and discipline.

His labors were intense, made still more arduous by the interference of enemies.

In the instruction of catechumens he employed so much pains, that five bishops could scarcely go through as much labor as he alone. At Sirmium, in Illyricum, the Arian bishop Photimus had caused a wide departure from the faith; and there being a vacancy in the year 379, Ambrose was sent for to attend the election of a new bishop.

The empress Justina, mother of young Valentinian, resided there at that time. She had conceived a predilection for Arianism, and endeavored by her authority and influence to expel Ambrose from the church. He continued, however, in his tribunal, though insulted and harassed by the mob.

After the death of her husband, she began openly to season her son with her doctrine, and to induce him to menace the bishop of Milan.

Ambrose exhorted him to support the doctrine received from the apostles. Young Valentinian, in a rage, ordered his guards to surround the church, and commanded Ambrose to come out of it. "I shall not willingly, replied the bishop, "give up the sheep of Christ to be devoured by wolves. You may use your swords and spears against me; such a death I shall freely undergo."

After this he was exposed to the various frauds and artifices of Justina, who feared to attack him openly. For the people were generally inclined to support the bishop, and his residence in the city, where the court was held, at once increased his influence, and exercised his mind with a series of trials.

Auxentius, a Scythian, of the same name with the Arian predecessor of Ambrose, was now introduced, under the protection of the empress, into Milan. He challenged Ambrose to hold a disputation with him in the emperor's court; which occasioned the bishop to write to Valentinian, that it was no part of the emperor's business to decide in points of doctrine. "Let him come to church," says he, "and, upon hearing, let

the people judge for themselves; and if they like Auxentius better, let them take him; but they have already declared their sentiments."

More violent measures were now entered into, and the fortitude of Ambrose was tried in a manner which he hitherto had not experienced. Auxentius moved, that a party of soldiers might be sent to secure for himself the possession of the church called Basilica; and tribunes came to demand it, with the plate and vessels belonging to it. At the same time, there were those who represented, that it was an unreasonable thing, that the emperor should not be allowed to have one place of worship which was agreeable to his conscience.

The language was specious, but deceitful.

Justina and her son, if they had thought it prudent to exert their authority, might have commanded the use, not of one only, but of all the churches; but the demand of the court was, that Ambrose should do what in conscience he could not; that he should, by his own deed, resign the church into Arian hands, which, as circumstances then stood, would have been to acknowledge, indirectly at least, the Arian creed.

He therefore calmly answered the officers, that if the emperor had sent to demand his house or land, money or goods, he would have freely resigned them, but that he could not deliver that which was committed to his care.

It appears, that he abated nothing of the maxims of passive submission to the civil power, which christians had ever practiced from the days of Paul, and that there is not the least ground to accuse Ambrose of disloyalty to his prince. He had already served him faithfully, and was ready again to expose himself to danger for his service.

The court knew his principles, and seem not to have had the least fear that he would draw the people into a rebellion, but they wished to menace him into a degree of compliance with Arianism.

During the suspension of this affair, he employed the people in singing Divine hymns and psalms, at the end of

which there was a solemn doxology to the honor of the Trinity The method of responsive singing had been generally practiced in the east, and was introduced by Ambrose into Milan, whence it was propagated into all the churches. The people were much delighted, their zeal for the doctrine of the Trinity was much inflamed, and one of the best judges in the world, who then lived at Milan, owns that his own soul was melted into Divine affection on these occasions.

The demands of the court were now increased; not only the Portian church which stood without the walls, but also the great church newly built within the city, were required to be given up. On the Lord's day after sermon, the catechumens being dismissed, Ambrose went to baptize those who were prepared for that ordinance, when he was told that officers were sent from the court to the Portian church; he went on, however, unmoved in the service, till he was told, that the people, having met with Castulus, an Arian presbyter, in the street, had lain hands on him.

Then with prayers and tears he besought God, that no man's blood might be shed, but rather his own, not only for the pious people, but also for the wicked. And he immediately sent some presbyters and deacons, who recovered Castulus safe from the tumult. The court enraged sent out warrants for apprehending several merchants and tradesmen, till the prisons became full; and the magistrates and men of rank were severely threatened; while the courtiers urged Ambrose with the imperial authority, whom he answered with the same loyalty and firmness as before.

"The Holy Spirit," said he, in his exhortations to the people, "has spoken in you this day, to this effect: '*Emperor, we entreat, but we do not fight.*'"

A notary coming to the bishop from the emperor, asked him, whether he intended to usurp the empire. "I have an empire," said he, "it is true, but it lies in weakness, according to the saying of the apostle, 'When I am weak, then I am strong.'"

Wearied and overcome at length with his resolution, the court, who meant to extort his consent, rather than to exercise

violence, ordered the guards to leave the church, where the bishop had lodged all night; the soldiers having guarded it so close, that none had been suffered to go out; and the people confined there having spent their time in singing psalms. Peace was made for the present, though Ambrose had still reason to fear for himself, and expressed his desire, in the epistle which he wrote to his sister Marcellina, that God would defend his church, and let its enemies rather satiate their rage with his blood.

He continued indefatigable both in praying and preaching, and closed his earthly career about the year 397, admired, regretted, and lamented by the whole christian world. His life not improbably had been shortened by the incessant activity of his mind, and by the multiplicity of his employments; for he was only fifty-seven years old, and had been appointed bishop of Milan at the age of thirty-four.

His spirit was remarkably kind and sympathetic; his benevolence was extended to all, but especially those of the household of faith.

His temper was heroic and strong, and no dignity or authority could shelter offenders from his rebukes, where he deemed it his duty to reprehend.

Augustine tells us, that he found it, in a manner impossible to have access to him, because of the multiplicity of his employments. The time he could spare from pastoral and charitable engagements, was devoted to study and meditation

His moral writings contain various things of solid utility, his treatise on *Offices* shines among these. It was evidently his wish to imitate Tully, and to show the superiority of christian over philosophical morals.

A noble design, but considered as a whole, feebly executed, because conducted without a plan. He modestly owns, indeed, that he was called to teach, before he himself had learned.

He wrote much on doctrinal points, and gave expositions of Scripture, liable, however, to great exceptions in point of accuracy, perspicuity, and order.

Yet is he true to the fundamentals of Divine truth, and the rich unction of godliness will at all times afford to the

reader, that edification which is in vain to be expected from cold, but more faultless comments.

The palm of heavenly-mindedness, in which the primitive christians so much excelled, was still in the possession of many in the fourth century. A chapter of Ambrose, on the benefit of death, is remarkable in this light.

As a fit conclusion, we subjoin a brief extract:

"We shall go to those who sit down in the kingdom of God with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, because, being asked to the supper, they made no excuse. We shall go where there is a paradise of pleasure, where the wretched being, who fell among thieves, no longer weeps over his wounds, where the thief himself rejoices in the participation of the heavenly kingdom, where there shall be no more storms or vicissitudes, but the glory of God alone shall shine. We shall go where Jesus hath prepared mansions for his servants, that where he is, there we may be also.

"There thy saints are freed from errors and anxieties, from folly and ignorance, fear and terror, from all lusts and carnal affections. Let us seek him, and embrace his feet, and worship him, that he may say to us, 'Fear not; I am the remission of sins. I am the light and the life; he that cometh to me shall not see death,'—because he is the fullness of divinity."

CHAPTER XII.

Gregory Nazianzen.

EMBRACES CHRISTIANITY; ASSISTS HIS FATHER IN PASTORAL DUTIES; HIS WORKS.

HE was born at Arianzum, an obscure village belonging to Nazanzium in Cappadocia, and came into the world about the time of the Nicene council.

His father, of the same name, a person of rank, had been brought up among a particular sect, most

resembling the Samaritans, who professed a mixture of Judaism and Paganism. To this opinion, as it had been the religion of his family, he was in early life extremely devoted.

But marrying a lady of rank, and of sincere christian piety, he was gradually induced to attend to the doctrines of the gospel. Her prayers and persuasions were equally ardent. Gregory, dreaming one night that he sang that passage, "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord," and feeling an uncommon pleasure on the occasion, informed his wife of the circumstance, who exhorted him to comply with the call of God to his soul.

Soon after, Leontius, bishop of Cæsarea, coming to the place, in his way to the council of Nice, Gregory was encouraged and assisted by him, and then received from the bishop of Nazianzum catechetical instruction, and the ordinance of baptism.

Nazianzum itself had but newly received christianity. The bishop who baptized Gregory was the first of its pastors, and died soon after. A long vacancy took place, and the town was overrun with ignorance and vice. Gregory at length was appointed to the See, which he filled for forty-five years with great success among the people.

His acquaintance with Basil, at Athens, has been mentioned. Here, also, he conversed with Julian the Apostate, and with that intuitive penetration into character, which seems a peculiar gift of some minds, he foretold what a curse he would one day prove. There seemed nothing at the time to justify his suspicions, but his penetrating eye discerned the embryo of the apostate, and of the scorner, in his bold and fearless spirit of disputation, and his presumptuous curiosity.

"See," said he, "what a pest the Roman empire nourishes within itself," referring to Julian.

After his baptism, Gregory felt himself strongly inclined to the ascetic life, but was, though reluctant, made a presbyter by his father. The old man, better versed in prayer than disputation, was once imposed on by Arian subtleties to communicate with that sect, while he took them to be

what they were not, but was recovered from the snare by the arguments of his more learned son. The latter, after giving way for a time to the monastic spirit of solitude, was prevailed on at length to return to Nazianzum, and to employ himself more worthy of a christian, by assisting his aged father in his pastoral cares.

His friend Basil offering him the bishopric of Sasima, in his diocese of Cæsarea, and the place being very mean and obscure, the pride of Gregory was hurt, and for some time a coolness subsisted between the two friends, both of whom appear not to have possessed, in any great degree, the humble simplicity of better times. And their fondness for Platonism, and their accurate acquaintance with secular learning, had doubtless no tendency to supply the defects of their christian views of doctrine.

Gregory, rejecting the offer, continued to assist his father, and had then an opportunity of enforcing a christian duty, constantly allowed to be such in the primitive times, namely, submission to the higher powers, as well as to give the most excellent advice to the governor of the place—to use his power with moderation.

Some civil tumults and broils at that place furnished him with this occasion.

His father, dying near a hundred years old, and his mother soon after, both of them persons of uncommon piety, Gregory was induced to go to Constantinople.

Here, under the emperor Valens, Arianism was at its height, and he preached to a few christians in a sort of conventicle; but growing popular and successful, he was at last appointed bishop; and at length, under Thedosius, he was confirmed in the charge.

It proved, however, extremely uneasy to him, notwithstanding the kindness of the emperor. His liberality and integrity were indeed admirable; and his private life and manners were most exemplary. But the weakness of his body, the irritability of his temper, and his extreme deficiency in talents for government, rendered him, notwithstanding the just renown of his incomparable oratory, unfit for so public a station.

The gospel was, however, adorned by his virtues, and particularly by the meekness with which he forgave a person who had been suborned to murder him, and who, having been baffled in his purpose by Providence, came to him in an agony of conscience, and confessed his intentions.

While he was at Constantinople, the famous council was held there for the settlement of the peace of the church, during the course of which, Gregory, a man of tried honesty, but void of political refinement, found himself so much opposed by those who envied him, and his best designs so much misconstrued, that he entreated Thedosius to accept his resignation. His farewell sermon, in which he reminded his audience what God had done by him from his first preaching among them, when he was attacked with stones by the Arians, being a master-piece of eloquence, moved the passions of the people exceedingly.

A second synod being held at Constantinople, being disgusted with the treatment he had met with in the first, and being also afflicted with a very infirm state of health, he refused to come, and expressed himself with unbecoming acrimony against councils in general.

However, he exerted himself sincerely to promote unity in the church, and was unbounded in his liberality to the poor. In his time, he was looked upon as an admirable theologian. And, indeed, in justness of taste, eloquence and secular learning, he was inferior to few; and these shining qualities, in an age more contentious than simple with respect to religion, procured him an admiration for christian knowledge above his deserts. He died in the year 389, in his own country.

His principal writings are his sermons. The first of them describes the difficulties and importance of the pastoral office, blames the forwardness of many to undertake it, and describes himself confounded under a sense of his insufficiency. In two other discourses, he inveighs against Julian in a manner that discovers more of the orator than the christian.

In another he endeavors to reconcile the minds of the people of Nazianzum to the payment of taxes. He observes that Jesus Christ came into the world at a time when a tax

was levied, to shew that God is present at such scenes, that he was made man, and did himself pay taxes, to comfort those who were in bondage, and to teach them to bear it patiently.

He has some poems that demonstrate a rich vein of genius, and a sensibility of mind. Nor is there wanting a true spirit of piety. He gives excellent reflections on the falsehood of mere human virtue, the necessity of Divine Grace through Jesus Christ, and of an humble confidence in it, and the danger of perishing through pride and vain glory. *Humility*, —prime christian grace,—that which so much adorns the character, was evidently at the foundation of Gregory's religion.

CHAPTER XV.

Augustine.

AUGUSTINE CONSPICUOUS IN THE LIST OF PRIMITIVE FATHERS; HIS BIRTH-PLACE; HIS MOTHER'S SALUTARY INFLUENCE OVER HIM; EMBRACES THE TRUE FAITH, AND SPENDS HIS LATTER DAYS ON THEOLOGY.

PROMINENT in the noble list of primitive fathers stands the name of Augustine; one who, for depth of thought, of feeling and speculation, is entitled to distinguished rank among the ancient worthies who went through life with the holy principle of self-denial written upon the actions of their lives; one who, by his numerous contributions to theology, has bequeathed to posterity a rich legacy of thought; exciting the interest and admiration of every one who loves the cause of truth and the welfare of the church.

Thus, all unconsciously, as it were, he has stamped, in immortal characters, his own fame on the pages of the world's history, there to remain unsullied by the defacing "finger of Time," while coming ages revere and admire the power of

that genius, and glory of that grace, which made him what he was; and, as they enjoy the full appropriation of that light, which he labored so indefatigably to secure, it should be coupled with that practical knowledge of heavenly wisdom he so highly extols.

He was born in the town of Tagaste, in Africa, where the early years of his life seem to have been spent. In a work of his, styled his "Confessions," he gives us an account of himself; and not only relates the external adventitious circumstances of his personal history, but also introduces us to that inner world of thought and feeling, motive and action, which lies too deep within for the casual glance of man to penetrate. We decline attention to his doctrinal discussions, his theories and opinions, which have drawn the attention of theologians, as amplification in these matters would better befit large volumes than our present brief sketch. We choose rather to follow the narration of his own pen, and to be guided by the revelations which he has himself made of his character, discipline and aim in the work of life. He seems to have been gifted by nature with uncommon intellectual ability, and keen powers of perception, that enabled him to make, without the aid of teacher, the distinction between truth and error, that came before him in his unceasing study. The history, however, of his early years, his infancy and childhood, discover to us a heart with the same propensity as others toward evil ways and evil inclinations. His thoughtlessness, his attempts at deception, his idleness and willfulness at school; or, if engaged, his love for senseless, unmeaning fables, in preference to more useful studies, he graphically describes, and deeply deplores as he looks upon it at a higher stand-point in the scale of existence. But here he was effectually encircled by those holy influences which flow from a pious mother's counsel and example; a circumstance he afterward acknowledged as a salutary and powerful restraint to his impetuous spirit, and drew from him many expressions of his deep indebtedness to his valued parent, as well as grateful recognition of that higher relation of Divine Providence, through which all the events of his life were ordered.

At the age of sixteen, when he was launching out further into the tempestuous society of human life, we find him, according to his own declaration, like one "deafened with the noise of the chain of mortality, the punishment of the pride of his soul, tossed hither and thither," going further from rest, and reaping a bitter harvest of sorrow from those seeds which he himself had planted.

For a season, at this time, he remained idle at home; and, while his heaven-born powers were suffered to lie in inactivity, the briars of lust grew over his mind with such fearful strength, that sedulous care of after years was requisite to root them out.

At length he turned his attention toward *eloquence*, and ambitiously sought to excel in those studies whereby it might best be prompted, yet with no higher motive than the pleasures of human vanity; the desire of eliciting the applause of men.

He became a head scholar in the school of rhetoric, and there met Cicero's Hortensius, with its exhortation to philosophy; the reading of which modified his ambitious views, and quite altered the tone of his inclinations. "All my vain hopes," said he, "immediately appeared contemptible; and I longed after the immortality of wisdom with an incredible ardor of heart."

"It excited and inflamed me, not after this or that sect, but to love, seek, and pursue, and lay hold on and embrace wisdom itself, whatever it was. And in this so great ardor, one thing only displeased me—that I found there the name of Christ." So deep was the impression this name had made upon his mind, through the early instructions of his mother, that whatsoever wanted it, however polite or learned it might be, it did not harmonize with his feelings, or suit his ideas.

From this he proposed to turn to the pages of inspiration, that he might, if possible, gain from the holy precepts of Divine revelation, that for which he sought; but the pride of his heart was not sufficiently subdued for the reception of the pure and simple doctrines of the gospel. "Behold," said he, "I met with a thing not understood by the proud, nor laid open to children; but low in its appearance, high in its

sense, and veiled with mysteries; nor was I such as could enter into, or bend down my neck to its humble pace. For I had not those thoughts then, which I express now, when I first looked upon that sacred book; but to me it then seemed unworthy to be compared to *Tully's* writings. For the swelling of my pride could not bear its humility; and the weakness of my sight did not penetrate into the inside thereof. Yet it was indeed such as would have grown up with little ones, but I disdained to be a little one, and being puffed up with pride, took myself to be a great one."

Turning from the fountain of truth, he became associated with the Manichæans, who, among many other absurd theories, maintained that man had two souls with opposite tendencies, and that particles of God were imprisoned in the fruits of the earth.

Meanwhile a pious mother was earnestly seeking his conversion to the true faith. Meeting with a bishop, she entreated him to use his influence to turn Augustine from such absurd doctrines; but he replied to her solicitations by saying, "Let him alone, only pray to the Lord for him; he will at length, by reading, discover the error, and see how great his impiety." At the same time, he told her how, when he was a child, he had been deceived in the same manner, and had not only read the books of the Manichæan sect, but copied almost all of them, and had himself found out, without any one's disputing with him, or convincing him, how much that faith was to be detested, and had therefore forsaken it. Not satisfied with this, she still importuned him with tears to attempt a reformation, till wearied with her continued entreaties, he impatiently answered, "Go your way, God bless you, for it can not be that a child of those tears should perish." This, she afterward said, was to her as an oracle from heaven.

For the space of nine years, however, he continued his blind devotion to the absurd system; following the emptiness of popular glory, and seeking in his false religion to perform meritorious works that should entitle him to particular eminence, and satisfy the desires of his restless spirit.

He became a teacher of rhetoric, and "sold to others the art of overcoming by eloquence," he says, "whilst I myself was overcome by inordinate desires." The theatre, too, was the scene of his displays. Upon one occasion, while attempting to compete for a prize in poetry, a certain soothsayer sent to him to know what reward he would give him, if by his help he might overcome; but his mind could not tolerate such absurd mysteries as those offered, and he answered, that if the crown to be obtained was to be of immortal gold, he would not permit a fly to be sacrificed to give him the victory. At the same time, however, he made no scruple in consulting planet-gazers, but was turned from this by the kind and fatherly advice of an aged friend, who besought him not to spend his time upon that empty study, when the care and pains should be bestowed upon something more useful. At this time, the death of one of his companions in error, to whom he was devotedly attached, somewhat changed his views of life, and gave him some troublesome thoughts concerning his future. He loathed life, and yet feared to die. "I thought," said he, "that my soul and his was but one soul in two bodies; and therefore I loathed life, because I was unwilling to live by *halves;* and perhaps I am afraid to die, lest *whole he* should perish whom I had loved so much."

Unable to bear even the sight of the place where they had lived together, he left, and went to Carthage, where the soothing influence of time and the charm of new friendships restored him some measure of comfort. Then it was he began to have some sense of the defectiveness of human friendship, compared with Divine charity, and to encourage his soul in the contemplation of heavenly truth. At this season he wrote his books, De Pulchro and Apto, which he dedicated to Hierius, the Roman orator, whom he had never seen, but whom he loved for the fame of his learning and eloquence. "See," he says, "where a weak soul lies, that is not yet fixed upon the solidity of truth. As the gales of tongues blow from the breasts of fallible men, so is she carried and turned and whirled about, and her light is intercepted by clouds, and she sees not the truth; and yet behold it stands before

us. And it seemed to me a great matter, if my style and my studies were known to such a man; which if he approved, I should be still more inflamed; but if he disapproved them, it would have wounded my vain heart, that was void and empty of solidity."

About this time, Faustus, a Manichæan bishop, came to Carthage, with whom Augustine early associated himself. He had long desired his coming, that in conference with him he might gain the wished-for light to his soul. He found him, though naturally eloquent, ignorant of the liberal sciences, and unable to give him satisfaction in his doubts. "I found him," says Augustine, "pleasant and agreeable in his discourse, and giving out the same things as others were accustomed to say, but much more gracefully: but what! was my thirst relieved by having these precious cups set before me by so graceful a waiter? My ears were already cloyed with such things; neither did they now seem any better to me, because they were better delivered; nor therefore true, because elegant; nor the soul therefore wiser, because the countenance was agreeable, and the utterance graceful." The discovery of such ignorance in one of their prominent men, greatly abated his affection for the Manichæan doctrine, and being entirely offended with the ways of the scholars of Carthage, he removed to Rome, where he was sick of a dangerous fever, the recovery from which he attributed to his mother's prayers.

After teaching rhetoric for a while at Rome, he repaired to Milan, where he was kindly received by Ambrose, and through the influence of his preaching, was more and more alienated from his long-cherished doctrine.

He found some books of the Platonic philosophers at this place, in which he found much of the Divinity of the Eternal Word, which gave a new bias to his thoughts, and led him still deeper into meditation of Divine subjects. As now the opposition between good and evil in human nature arrested the attention of Augustine, it could not but occur to him as the most difficult of all questions, "Whence is evil in this nature," which feels itself attracted toward what is good, and

is even conscious of it, as belonging to its original being? This question—the origin of evil—employed him for a long time. It was by contemplating this question that he was led to Manichæism; and it was by prosecuting his inquiries further, that he was brought to abandon the system. The writings of the philosophers, though they informed him of many Divine truths, yet, with his state of mind, rather fostered pride in him than humility. From these he turned to the right and only true source of truth—the pages of inspiration, and especially dwelt upon Paul's epistles, wherein he learned the humbling doctrines of the cross.

In conversation with one Simplicianus, the story of the conversion of Victorinus, the famous Roman orator, was related to him, which produced in him a strong desire to imitate his example; but he was kept back by the force of his evil habits.

Pontitianus, a courtier, then visited him, and told him of the life of Anthony, and how two of his fellow-courtiers, upon reading it, had renounced the world. This seemed to deepen the impression already made upon his mind, and brought his soul into a great conflict, during which he retired into a garden alone in great distress. There he had recourse to the sacred volume, and upon opening it, his eye fell upon the passage, "Not in revelings and drunkenness, not in chamberings and impurities, not in strifes and envies; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh in its concupiscences."

With the end of this sentence, as if a light of confidence and security had streamed into his heart, all the darkness of his former hesitation was dispelled.

A song of praise to God for his deliverance immediately filled his soul, and he at once resolved to abandon his profession as a teacher, and enter upon a course of life more congenial to his new-created nature. By way of Rome he returned to Africa. At Ostia, his mother was taken sick and died, and how much greater must have been her joy on leaving the world, since the object of her solicitude and prayers, had become an hopeful heir of the kingdom. They had

hours of heavenly intercourse together, and when he closed her eyes in death, he greatly mourned his irreparable loss.

She had ever sought to conduct him to the temple of wisdom, and now as he stood upon its very threshold, rejoicing in the new and alluring prospect, she was taken from him, but his soul now stood on the broad and immovable basis of christian confidence, and he looked above and beyond transitory scenes, and found peace and comfort in God.

He had been able to attain inward peace only after a long and violent contest with an ardent and vehement natural temperament, which in the wild consciousness of strength, resisted every thing Divine. Hurried hither and thither during many years of his life, between the ideal standard which attracted the longing of his spirit, and the desires and passions which still held him captive to the lusts of the world, he experienced in himself what the contest of the flesh and spirit is. From his own internal experience, he learnt how to understand the fundamental ideas of christian anthropology, and especially of the Pauline doctrine of man; and indeed he occupied himself especially with the study of Paul's writings at the very time when that great crisis in his character took place.

As he found in his life two great divisions,—on the one hand, a nature powerless notwithstanding all its efforts, and striving in vain after holiness; and on the other, a nature subordinate to faith, and, by the power of redemption, triumphant over evil,—he saw again the same great divisions in the historical development of human nature in general.

The contrast between that which proceeds from nature left to itself and estranged from God, and that which proceeds from the new and Divine principle of life imparted to humanity, through redemption and regeneration—this contrast, which he had learned so well from his own experience, was thenceforth adopted by him, as the central point of his theology.

He wrote numerous treatises, and presented various theories and opinions, of which we can not speak here. He set apart the last years of his long and active life for completing

his theological works, which were in part connected with controversies which he regarded as important. As the many duties belonging to his episcopal office left him no leisure for this, he procured the presbyter, Eraclius, who had been formed under his eye, to be united with him as an assistant, with the consent of the church. He now employed himself in preparing a Critique of all his writings,—his *Retractiones*. What particularly induced him to do this, was his seeing that many passages from his earlier works were brought against him by the Pelagians and semi-Pelagians, to the great embarrassment of his enthusiastic admirers, who would not allow any error in a man whose authority with them was *too great*. Augustine, however, was far from claiming any such authority for his works; an authority which in his view belonged to the Bible alone. He said to these extravagant admirers of his, that they gave themselves needless trouble; they had not undertaken a good cause, and must lose the process, even by his own decision. He rejoiced in the acknowledgment that he had made advances in the knowledge of the truth, and that he had found out many of his early errors to be such; and he was not now ashamed to point them out publicly in his works.

It may indeed have also been, as might be inferred from what has already been said, that as his mind was in many respects more limited by system in the latter part of his life, he regarded many of the more unshackled opinions of his earlier years as erroneous; or that he himself may have unconsciously carried back his altered system into the expressions of his earlier views.

He next employed himself about his last work in the Pelagian controversies, in opposition to Julian, which he was never able to complete. He wrote on this work in the midst of violent political storms, which brought desolation and ruin over the flourishing portion of the world in which he lived. He had the pain to see accomplished the downfall of a man who had once been very dear to him. The leader, Boniface, one of the most distinguished and successful commanders of the declining Roman empire, had been induced

by the advice of Augustine himself, to abandon his intention of withdrawing into monastic life, and to devote his powers to the defense of oppressed Romish christendom against the raging incursions of the barbarous nations. But he was afterward prevailed upon, in consequence of the intrigues of the commandant Aëtius, his rival in military renown, to rebel against the imperial government. In order to sustain himself in this contest, he called in the Vandals from Spain to his aid. Augustine employed a favorable moment to speak to the conscience of Boniface, in a letter written with genuine christian dignity and great wisdom,—a true model for such complicated relations.

Boniface had to learn by bitter experience the truth of what his old friend had predicted to him. He was led on further than he himself had intended, and when he wished to retrace his steps, it was too late. The Vandals looked upon those flourishing regions as their own, and from being the allies of Boniface, became his enemies. Augustine's residence, the city Hippo, was beseiged by them. In the midst of these sufferings, and in the new prospect of dangers impending, it was Augustine's common prayer that God would deliver the town from the enemy; or that he would grant his servants power to endure every thing which his will should impose upon them; or that God would take him out of the world. The latter event took place. On the third month of the seige, which lasted fourteen months, Augustine died, in the seventy-sixth year of his age, in the year 429.

The strong powers of his mind, sanctified by Divine grace, fitted him for great usefulness in life, but while he was absorbed in the great truths of revelation, the lamp of life went out, and he went to employ the energies of his being in a higher and nobler capacity on high.

"Though dead, he yet speaks" in his works, and the echo of his name shall descend to latest posterity.

CHAPTER XIV.

John Chrysostom.

EARLY DISPLAY OF ELOQUENCE; CHOSEN BISHOP; EFFORTS AT REFORMATION; BANISHMENT; UNJUST TREATMENT, AND SUDDEN DEATH.

T THE commencement of the fifth century, Chrysostom was bishop of Constantinople, where the emperor Arcadius resided, while his brother Honorius reigned in the west; these two being the sons and successors of the great Theodosius.

He was born at Antioch, about the year 354. His parents were persons of some rank, and by the care of his mother, (for he lost his father soon after his birth,) his education was attended to in a very particular manner. By her means, he had the advantage of being early prejudiced in favor of christianity. Yet, being naturally studious of eloquence, he devoted himself to the care of that great master, Libanius of Antioch, who, being one day asked who would be capable of succeeding him in his school?—"John," said he, "if the christians had not stolen him from us." So great was the idea he had formed of his eloquence.

Having pleaded a little time in the forum, he began to find a vacancy in his mind, not to be supplied by secular arts and studies. The Spirit of God seems, from that time, to have drawn him to study the Scriptures, and one material advantage he derived from his master, Diodorus, who was afterward bishop of Tarsus. By him he was taught to forsake the popular whims of Origen, and to investigate the literal and historical sense of the Divine Word; a practice in which he differed from most of the fathers of his times.

Notwithstanding the entreaties of his pious mother, he lived in monastic austerities for some time; after which, Flavian, bishop of Antioch, promoted him to the office of pres-

byter in his diocese. About the year 379, a sedition broke out at Antioch, on account of taxes, and the people dragged about the streets the statues of Theodosius, and of his excellent lady, Flaccilla, and of their two sons, in contempt.

But finding afterward the danger of the emperor's resentment, this inconstant and turbulent people, were in the greatest distress. Chrysostom failed not to improve the opportunity.

Serious as he himself was in christian views, so far as he understood them, and excellent as a preacher of the law, he earnestly exhorted them to repentance. His spirit was softened and over-awed with the mingled sensations of pity and devotion, while he observed the severe proceedings of the courts, and the vain intercessions of relations for husbands and fathers. He was led to reflect, how awful the day of judgment will be, when not a mother, sister or father can arrest the course of Divine justice, or give relief to nearest relatives; and, in his homilies, he with much eloquence and piety enforced these considerations on a giddy, unthinking people.

In the year 398, by the advice of Eutropius, chief chamberlain of the palace, he was appointed bishop of Constantinople, being hurried thither by a fraudulent scheme, such as he himself had approved of in like cases.

He began immediately to attempt the reformation of his diocese, and highly censured many of the customs both of the clergy and laity.

The common people heard him gladly, as, for a time at least, they generally will hear, in all ages, a preacher who speaks to the conscience, though severely, yet faithfully, with an earnest desire exhibited in his whole manner to do them good.

Even some of the dissenters attended on his preaching, nor did he labor in vain in reclaiming heretics. The clergy, indolent and corrupt as they then were, opposed him vehemently, and watched opportunities against him. The wealthy and the great, offended at his plain reproofs, were as ill-disposed as the clergy. He however persevered, nor did he confine

his cause to Constantinople. In order to overcome the Arian ism of the Goths, he ordained some persons of their country, and assigned them a church within the city, by whose industry he reclaimed many, and he himself often preached there, and prevailed on others of the clergy to do the same. He made liberal and active attempts to spread the gospel among barbarous nations, though the troubles, which afterward befel him, must have checked both these and other christian designs.

He was, doubtless, endowed with many qualities which belong to a reformer, and on account of his earnest efforts, profligate bishops accused him.

A synod, at length, held and managed by Theophilus, bishop of Alexandria, his determined enemy, and one of the worst ecclesiastical characters in history, supported by the influence of the proud Eudoxia, the empress, condemned him with extreme injustice. Chrysostom, foreseeing the effect of the storm which was gathering around him, addressed himself to the bishops, who were his friends, assembled in the great rooms of his house. "Brethren," said he, "be earnest in prayer, and as you love our Lord Jesus, let none of you for my sake desert his charge. For, as was Paul's case, I am ready to be offered up, and the time of my departure is at hand. I see I must undergo many hardships, and then quit this troublesome life. I know the subtlety of Satan, who can not bear to be daily tormented with my preaching. By your constancy you will find mercy at the hand of God, and remember me in your prayers." The assembly being afflicted with vehement sorrow, he besought them to moderate their grief; saying, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." "I always told you this life is a road in which joys and sorrows both march hastily away. The visible scene of things before us is like a fair, where we buy and sell, and sometimes recreate ourselves. Are we better than the patriarchs? Do we excel the prophets and apostles, that we should live here for ever?"

When one of the company passionately bewailed the desolations of the church, the bishop, striking the end of his right

fore-finger on the palm of his left hand, (which he was accustomed to do when much in earnest,) said, "Brother, it is enough, pursue the argument no further; however, as I requested, desert not your churches. As for the doctrine of Christ, it began not with me, nor shall it die with me. Did not Moses die? and did not Joshua succeed him? Paul was beheaded, and left he not Timothy, Titus, Apollos, and many more behind him?"

Thus did this worthy father comfort his mourning friends.

The people of Constantinople, who sincerely loved the bishop, insisted on his being heard by more equitable judges, and so strong was their agitation, that Chrysostom, fearing a popular insurrection, delivered himself up secretly to the officer, who came to execute the imperial warrant against him. He was conveyed immediately to a port in the Black sea. As soon as it was known that he was gone, the whole city was in an uproar; many blamed the emperor, who, in so weak a manner, had given up the most upright of men, to the malice of his wife and of Theophilus. The tumult was at length so violent, that Eudoxia herself, affrighted at the danger, pressed her husband to recall him, and even wrote to Chrysostom a letter full of protestations of sorrow and respect.

He was therefore restored to his bishopric. But the calm season lasted not long.

A silver statue of the empress was solemnly erected in the street, just before the great church of St. Sophia, and dedicated with many heathenish extravagancies. The bishop impatient of these things, publicly reproved them from the pulpit. His enemies could not desire a greater advantage, and they improved it to the utmost.

He was suspended and confined; his friends and followers were dispersed, rifled, killed, or imprisoned. Edicts were issued, severely threatening all that refused to renounce communion with Chrysostom.

Receiving at length a warrant signed by the emperor to depart, he exhorted his friends to continue their care of the church, and to communicate with the bishop, who should be

chosen, by common consent, in his room, and he retired once more from his See, in the year 404.

He was conveyed to Cucusus, in Armenia, a barren, cold region, infested with robbers, and mournfully marked already with the murder of Paul, the former bishop of Constantinople. His journey to this place was attended with many grievous hardships, though sweetened with the compassionate care of various persons, who keenly sympathized with injured innocence. At Cucusus, however, he met with very generous treatment. Here he preached frequently to a people who heard him gladly. A grievous famine raging in these parts, he was enabled, by the liberality of Olympias, to relieve the poor, and he redeemed many captives which had been taken by the Isaurian robbers. He had formerly conceived a plan for converting the pagans, which were still in Phenicia, and had made some progress in it.

But, understanding that the design had met with a check, he again made vigorous attempts for the support of so good a work, and ordered sums of money for the erection of churches and the support of missionaries. He seemed to recover his health for a time; but, winter approaching, he felt the usual effects of that season on persons of weak constitutions. His stomach had unhappily received much injury from the austerities of his youth, and never recovered its tone. The next spring he recruited, but was always obliged to observe the strictest regimen.

He was obliged to move from place to place on account of danger from robbers; and as he wrote to Innocent, bishop of Rome, who sincerely, though unsuccessfully, labored in his cause, he was, in the third year of his banishment, exposed to famine, pestilence, war, continual sieges and incredible desolation, to death every day, and to the Isaurian swords.

His enemies, beholding with an evil eye the respect every where paid to him, procured an order for him to be removed to Pityus, the very shore of the Black sea. In his way thither, he was brought to an oratory of Basiliscus, who had suffered martyrdom under Dioclesian's persecution. Here he

desired to rest; but his guards, who had all along treated him with brutish ferocity, refused him the indulgence.

Nature was, however, exhausted; he had not gone four miles before he was so extremely ill that they were obliged to return with him. Here he received the Lord's Supper, made his last prayer before them all, and, having concluded with his usual doxology, "glory be to God for all events," he breathed out his soul, in the fifty-third year of his age, in the year 407.

This great man, "though dead, yet speaks" by his works.

He labored much in expounding the Scriptures, and, though not copious in the exhibition of evangelical truths, still he every where shows that he loved it.

He was a bishop of the first See; learned, eloquent above measure, of talents the most popular, of a genius the most exuberant, and of a solid understanding by nature; magnanimous and generous, liberal almost to excess, sympathizing with distress of every kind, and severe only to himself; a man of that open, frank, ingenuous temper which is so proper to conciliate friendship; a determined enemy of vice, and of acknowledged piety in all his intentions! Yet we have seen him exposed to the keenest shafts of calumny, expelled with unrelenting rage by the united efforts of the court, the nobility, the clergy of his own diocese, and the bishops of other dioceses. What is to be said? The just conclusion seems to be that *real godliness*, under christian as well as heathen governments, is too much hated, dreaded and persecuted.

CHAPTER XV.

Jerome.

CLASSICAL EDUCATION; LIVES IN RETIREMENT; MENTAL CHARACTERISTICS.

THIS renowned monk was born at Stridon, a town in the confines of Dalmatia and Pannonia, under the emperor Constantine, in the year 331. The place was obscure, and was rendered still more so by the desolations of the Goths.

That Jerome was of a liberal and opulent family, appears from the pains taken with his education, which was finished at Rome, that he might there acquire the graces of Latinity. He was in truth the most learned of the Roman fathers, and was eminent both for genius and industry. He was brought up in christianity from infancy, and hence, like other good men who have had the same advantages, he appears never to have known the extreme conflicts with indwelling sin, which, to later converts, have given so much pain, and often have rendered them more eminently acquainted with vital religion.

After his baptism at Rome, he traveled into France, in company with Bonosus, a fellow student. He examined libraries, and collected information from all quarters; and, returning into Italy, he determined to follow the profession of a monk,—a term which did not at that time convey the modern idea of the word. In Jerome's time it meant chiefly the life of a private recluse christian, who yet was fettered by no certain rules nor vows, but acted according to his own pleasure.

Such a life suited the disposition of a studious person like him. He was, however, made a presbyter of the church, but never would proceed any further in ecclesiastical dignity. He spent four years in the deserts of Syria, reading and studying with immense industry.

A commentary on the prophet Obadiah, which he published, bore strong marks of juvenile indiscretion, as he afterward frankly owned. And here, by the assistance of a few, who visited him, Nicodemus-like, in the evenings, lest he should give umbrage to his brethren, he acquired the knowledge of the Hebrew tongue, and, with indefatigable labor, he studied also the Chaldee and the Syriac.

On his return to Rome, he became intimate with Paula, the illustrious descendant of the Pauls, so famous in Roman story, with Marcella, and other opulent ladies. The monastic life, which had long flourished in the east, was only beginning to be fashionable in the west. The renowned Athanasius, and his Egyptian friends, rendered respectable during their exile at Rome by their sufferings for the faith, contributed to throw a dignity on such a course of life; and the zeal of Jerome nursed the same spirit among serious persons. These ladies, with whom he was intimate, were hence induced to impart a celebrity to the monastic taste by their own example.

Spleen and calumny hastened the departure of Jerome from Rome. This great man had not learned to command his passions, and to disregard the breath of fame. Unjust aspersions on his character affected him with a very blameable acrimony. He retired again to the east; there several of his admirers followed him. He chose Bethlehem as the seat of his old age, where Paula erected four monasteries,—three for the women and one for the men, in which Jerome lived the rest of his life, enjoying at times the society of his learned friends.

He instructed the women in theology, and Paula died, after having lived twenty years in the monastery.

Jerome himself died in the ninety-first year of his age, in the year 422.

He was certainly serious, in the very best sense of the word; yet it is to be lamented that a man of so great sincerity, and of a mind so vigorous, should have been of so little service to mankind. The truth is, his knowledge was contracted and low. He confessed, that while he macerated his body in the deserts, he was thinking of the pleasures and

delights of Rome. He understood not the true gospel-mystery of mortifying sin, and, by his voluntary humility and neglect of the body, added to the fame and splendor of his voluminous but ill-digested learning, he contributed more than any other person of antiquity to the growth of superstition.

The works of such a writer, though sound in the essentials of christianity, are not considered worthy a particular review, and consequently receive only a brief notice. Here and there a vigorous and evangelical sentiment breaks out amidst the clouds.

His epistles discover him to have been sincere and heavenly-minded, though his temper was choleric.

In a letter to Nepotian, there are various rules worthy the attention of pastors, concerning the contempt of riches, the avoiding of secular familiarities, and the regulation of external conduct.

He wrote an epitaph upon this same Nepotian, some time after, eloquent, pious and pathetic.

In this he confesses the doctrine of original sin, and celebrates the victory of Christ over death.

He makes an excellent use of the public miseries of the times, by recommending more strongly a practical attention to piety. Hence, also, he makes the best apology which could be invented for his favorite solitude.

In his letter to Rusticus the monk, the learned reader who would see a practical comment on Paul's cautions against voluntary humility in the Epistle to the Colossians, may behold it in Jerome.

He abounds in self-devised ways of obtaining holiness, while the true way of humble faith in Jesus is not despised indeed, but little attended to.

A short letter to Florentius shows genuine humility, and acquiescence to Christ, as his sole hope, after all his austerities.

It was this humble faith in Christ, which checked the impetuosity and arrogance of his natural temper, repressed his vain-glory, and in some degree changed a lion into a lamb. For Jerome, though exactly formed by constitution and

habit, to sustain the character of a Pharasee, was too deeply conscious of internal pollution to be one in reality.

It can not be denied that he was humble before God, and truly pious; and of him it must be said, to the honor of christian godliness, how much worse a man he would have been, had he not known Christ Jesus, and how much better, if he had known him with more clearness and perspicuity.

CHAPTER XVI.

Patrick, the Apostle of the Irish.

MANNER OF HIS CONVERSION; SINGULAR DEVOTION TO PIOUS LABORS; EXTRACTS FROM HIS WRITINGS; MOTIVES OF ACTION.

THIS remarkable man was trained for his important calling by a very peculiar way of life; and in his example we see how that infinite wisdom which conducts the development of the kingdom of God on earth, knows how to produce great results by what, in the eyes of men, appears little.

Patrick, in his native language, called Sukkath, was born about the year 372, in the village of Bonaven, between the Scottish towns of Dumbarton and Glasgow. He was the son of a poor, unlearned deacon belonging to the village church. No particular care was taken of his education, and he led a thoughtless life, without laying to heart the religious instructions of his parents, till toward his seventeenth year.

It then came to pass, that a severe chastisement by his heavenly Father woke him from his sleep of death to a higher life.

Pirates, of the savage tribe of the Scots, who then inhabited Ireland, landed at Patrick's residence, and carried him and others away as prisoners. He was sold into the service of a Scottish chief, who committed to him the care of his cattle. Trouble led his heart to God, whom, during the days of quiet, in his parents' house, he had not thought of.

Forsaken by men, he found in Him consolation and happiness, and now first learnt to know and enjoy the treasure which the christian has in heaven.

As he wandered about with the cattle in the ice and snow, he enjoyed intercourse with God in prayer and calm meditation. Let us hear him speak for himself, as he describes the change that now came over him, in a narrative written by him at a later period.

"I was," he says, "about sixteen years old, and knew nothing of the true God, when I and many thousand persons were carried away into captivity, according to our deserts, since we had departed from God, and had not observed His commands.

"There God opened my unbelieving mind, so that, although late, I thought of my sins, and turned with my whole heart to the Lord my God, to Him who looked down on my low condition, had pity on my youth and ignorance, and before I knew Him, before I could distinguish between good and evil, guarded, protected, and cherished me, as a father his son. This I certainly know, that before God humbled me, I was like a stone sunk in the mire; but when He came who had power to do it, He raised me in His mercy, and put me on a very high place.

"Wherefore I must testify aloud, in order to make some return to the Lord for such great blessings in time and eternity, which no human reason is able to estimate.

"When I came to Ireland, and had daily charge of the cattle, I prayed many times a day; the fear of God and love to Him was increasingly kindled in me; faith grew in me, so that in one day I offered a hundred prayers, and at night almost as many; and when I passed the night in the woods or on the mountains, I rose up to pray in the snow, ice, and rain, before day-break.

"Yet I felt no pain; there was no sluggishness in me, such as I now find in myself, for then the spirit glowed within me."

After spending six years in the service of this chief, he believed that he heard a voice in his sleep which promised

him a speedy return to his native land, and soon announced to him that a vessel was ready for him.

In dependence on this call he set out, and after a journey of several days he met with a vessel which was on the point of sailing. But the captain at first would not receive the poor, unknown youth. Patrick fell on his knees and prayed. He had not finished his prayer when one of the ship's company called him back, and summoned him to go with them. After undergoing many sufferings, and experiencing, by the mercy that guarded him, many a deliverance from great dangers, he reached his home once more.

Several years after, he was again taken prisoner by pirates. But after sixty days he regained his liberty by a special interposition of Providence, and returned home after many fresh dangers and toils. Great was the joy of his parents to see their son again who had endured so much, and they entreated him now to remain constantly with them. But he felt an irresistible call to carry the message of salvation to the people among whom he had passed his youth, and had been born again to the life of heaven.

As the apostle Paul was called by the Lord, in a night-vision, to carry the first news of salvation to the people of Macedonia, so a man appeared to Patrick in a night-vision, with many letters. He gave him one, and he read the words, "words of the Irish," and as he was reading he thought he heard the united voices of many Irish, who dwell near the sea, exclaiming, "we beseech thee, child of God, come and again walk among us!" His feelings would not allow him to read any further, and he awoke. Another night he believed that he heard a voice from heaven, in a dream, the last words of which were intelligible to him, "He who gave his life for thee, He speaks in thee." He awoke full of joy. One night it was as if there was something in him, and yet above him, that was not himself, praying with deep sighs, and at the close of the prayer it spake as if it was no other than the spirit of God. He awoke and recollected the transcendent expressions of Paul, respecting the intimate intercourse of God's children with his own Spirit.

As the Almighty Shepherd of souls does not draw to himself, guide and cherish all souls in exactly the same way, but manifests and imparts himself to them in various ways, according to his special purposes respecting them and their diversified wants, so he granted Patrick, by peculiar tokens of his grace, the pledge for the certainty of his intimate communion with him, and particularly for his call to publish the gospel to the inhabitants of Ireland.

His relations and friends strove to keep him back, and represented that such an undertaking far exceeded his powers. We are informed of this by himself: "Many opposed my going, and said behind my back, 'Why does this man rush into danger among the heathen, who do not know the Lord?' It was not badly intended on their part; but they could not comprehend the matter on account of my uncouth disposition." Yet nothing could turn him aside, for he depended on the power of the Lord, who had imparted to him an inward assurance that He had called him, and would be with him.

He says himself: "Whence did I receive so great and blessed a gift, to know and love God, to leave native land and parents, although many gifts were offered me with tears if I would remain there?

"And, against my wishes, I was forced to offend my relations and many of my well-wishers.

"But, according to God's guidance, I did not yield to them at all, not by my own power, but it was God who conquered in me and withstood them all, so that I went to the people of Ireland to publish the gospel to them, and suffered many insults from unbelievers, and many persecutions, even unto bonds, resigning my liberty for the good of others. And, if I am found worthy, I am ready to give up my life with joy for his name's sake."

Thus Patrick went to Ireland in the year 431. The knowledge he had obtained of the Irish language was now of great use to him.

By the sound of a kettle drum, he collected large assemblies of people in the open air, and told them of the sufferings of

the Saviour for sinful humanity; and the word of the cross evinced its power on the hearts of many.

He met, indeed, with warm opposition. The priests and national bards, who had great influence, instigated the people against him, and he had to endure many severe persecutions. But he conquered by steadfastness of faith, glowing zeal and the attractive power of love.

The following incident furnishes a beautiful example of the power with which he operated on the minds of men.

He was at one time in a family of rank, the members of which he baptized. The son of the house, a youth, entertained such love for Patrick that he resolved, however much his friends tried to dissuade him, to forsake all and to accompany the preacher of the gospel amidst all his dangers and toils. On account of his friendly, gentle disposition, Patrick gave him the name of Benignus. He availed himself of the agreeable voice of the youth, in order to influence the people by means of singing.

Benignus was zealously engaged with him in publishing the gospel to the time of his death, and he succeeded him in the pastoral office. Many of the national bards were converted by him, and sang, in their own hymns, of the worthlessness of idolatry, and to the praise of God and Christ. Patrick devoted himself particularly to the heads or chieftains of the people.

If they allowed themselves to be stirred up by the priests against the foreign religion, they could do much harm; and, on the other hand, if they received the gospel, their example would render the people more inclined toward it, and form a counterpoise to the reverence felt for the Druids.

The superior education of these chiefs also rendered it more easy to convince them of the absurdity of idolatry.

But Patrick was far from seeking merely to bring about an external conversion of the people, by means of their chiefs; he frequently traveled round the whole island, accompanied by his pupils and assistants, read to the assembled people out of the Gospels, and preached on what he had read. Young persons of both sexes were seized with the love of a religious

life; and even female slaves, who would not allow themselves to be terrified by the threats and ill-treatment of their heathen masters.

Patrick received slaves who had suffered harsh treatment from their owners; and, when he found young men of the lower rank who seemed suited for a higher calling, he took care they should be instructed and brought up to be teachers of the people.

From his youth up, he had experienced, as we have seen, special Divine leadings, by which his heart was deeply affected. As he now labored with the ardor and power of faith, he was able to produce effects on rude minds to which common human power was incompetent. He saw himself, also, here supported by the peculiar guidance of that God whose word he published. He speaks of this fact, not with spiritual pride, but full of the sense of his own unworthiness and weakness, and from a consciousness of the power and grace of God that worked in him and by him.

After speaking, in one of his letters, of the miracles which God had allowed him to perform among a rude people, he adds: "Yet I conjure all persons; let no one, on account of these or similar things, believe that I place myself on a level with any of the apostles or perfected saints; for I am a poor, sinful, despicable man."

But far more important to him than the miracles which he performed was that which filled his whole soul, that by him, who, till God had led him to himself by sharp correction, had felt so little concern about his own salvation, many thousands of the people who had hitherto known nothing of the true God had been brought to the knowledge of salvation.

"Be astonished," he says in his confessions, "both high and low, who fear God, and ye fine talkers who know nothing of the Lord, understand and examine who it is has called a simple person like myself from the midst of those who were regarded as wise men and scribes, as mighty in word and works; and though I was despicable in the eyes of the world, He has called me by His spirit to serve, though with fear and trembling, yet faithfully and blamelessly, the people to

whom the love of Christ hath led me. I must bless my God unceasingly, who has kept me faithful in the day of trial, so that at this time I can present my soul full of confidence as a living thank-offering to my Lord Christ, who has rescued me from all my distresses, so that I am obliged to say, 'Who am I, O Lord, and what is my calling? since thou hast so gloriously revealed thy divinity to me, that to-day I can continually rejoice among the heathen, and glorify thy name wherever I am, not only in prosperity, but also in tribulation;' so that whatever may befall me, I can receive evil as well as good with an equal mind, and must continually thank God, who has taught me to believe in Him as eternal truth!"

Patrick endeavored to avoid even the semblance of seeking his own glory or profit. A man who according to all human appearance was not fitted to accomplish any thing so great, who was called from obscurity and meanness to so high a place, and hence one in whom, as it often happens, many who knew him earlier and only according to the flesh, were not disposed to recognize what the Spirit of God had effected; for such an one it was necessary to be peculiarly careful to take away every pretext from those who were disposed to explain every thing by flesh and blood, whatever they could not measure or conceive of by the common standard. When many persons, affected by gratitude and love to the teacher of salvation, their spiritual father, voluntarily brought him presents, and pious females gladly surrendered their ornaments for the purpose, Patrick, in order to avoid every appearance of evil, refused them all, though the givers, both men and women, were at first offended.

He himself gave presents to the heathen chiefs, in order to procure from them peace for himself and his flock; he redeemed many christians from captivity, and was ready, as a faithful shepherd, to give up every thing, even life itself, for his sheep. In his Confessions, which, after he had been laboring thirty years in his calling, he addressed to his converts, he says: "In order that you may give me joy, and that I may always give you joy in the Lord, I do not repent of what I have done, and yet it is not enough for me. I give

up, and will give up far more. The Lord is powerful henceforth to grant that I may give myself up for your souls. I call God to witness that I have not written this in order to gain honor from you. That honor is enough for me which is not seen but is believed in the heart. God is faithful, who has promised, and who never lies. But I see myself already in this world exalted by the Lord above measure.

"I know very well that poverty and discomfort suit me much better than riches and a life of pleasure.

"Yes! even the Lord Christ became poor for our sakes.

"Daily I expected to be seized, to be dragged to slavery, or to be killed. But I feared none of all these things, on account of the promises of heaven; for I have cast myself in the arms of Almighty God who rules over all.

"Now I commend my soul to my faithful God, whom I serve as His messenger in my lowliness; but since He is no respecter of persons, and has chosen me to this calling that I should serve Him, as one of the least of His servants, how can I repay the Lord for all the goodness He has shown me? What shall I say unto my Lord, or what shall I promise Him? For I have no power unless He gives it me!

"But He tries the heart and the reins, and He knows that I greatly desire that He would give me the cup of suffering to drink as He has given it to others who love Him.

"May my God never suffer it, that I should lose the church which He has won in the most remote corner of the earth. I pray God that He would give me perseverance, and think me worthy to bear a faithful testimony until the time of my departure; and if I have ever striven to acccomplish any thing for the sake of the God whom I love, I beseech Him that I may be allowed to shed my blood for His name with those my new converts who have been imprisoned, even though I should obtain no burial, or even should my body be torn in pieces by wild beasts.

"I firmly believe, if this should happen to me, that I have gained my soul along with my body; for beyond a doubt we shall rise again in that day with the splendor of the sun; that is, with the glory of the Redeemer, who is the Son

of the living God, as fellow-heirs with Christ and bearing his image; for we shall reign by Him, and through Him, and with Him.

"That sun which we see, daily rises for us according to God's command, but it will never reign, nor will its splendor endure forever. All the unhappy beings who worship it will suffer punishment. But we adore believingly the *true sun—Christ*, who will never set; and also he who does His will shall never set, but will live forever, as Christ lives forever, and reigns with God the Father, and the Holy Spirit, from eternity, both now and forever."

Patrick would gladly have revisited his native land, Britain, his relatives, and his old friends in Gaul, after many years' absence and labor, but he sacrificed his intention to a higher call. "I would gladly," he says, "travel to my parents in my native land, and also visit the brethren in Gaul, to see once more the faces of the saints of my Lord. God knows that I wish it very much; but I am bound by the Spirit, who testifies that He will pronounce me guilty if I do this, and I dread lest the work I have begun should fall to the ground."

Thus he continued to labor, making every thing subservient to the glory of God, till death ended his career, and he went home to His heavenly mansions on high, to reap his everlasting reward in an eternity of blessedness, at the right hand of the Eternal throne.

CHAPTER XVII.

Columban.

ESTABLISHES CONVENTS FOR THE PURPOSE OF SPREADING THE GOSPEL; INSTRUCTIONS TO HIS PUPILS; IS FINALLY BANISHED.

THE wild parts of Ireland became, from the example of Patrick, covered with monasteries erected by the hard labor of the monks. The Irish monasteries were distinguished for strict christian discipline, for industry, zeal for the knowledge of the Scriptures, and general intelligence, as much as they could collect of it. The Irish monks brought knowledge from Britain and France; they preserved this, and digested it in their monastic retirement, and were destined to bring back the seeds of science along with more living christianity to the districts from which they had formerly received these seeds, but where they were choked by the spreading barbarism.

The most renowned of the Irish monasteries, and a seminary for missionaries and teachers of the rude nations, was that of Bangor, founded by the Abbot Comgal, who had three thousand monks under his care.

From this school the Irish abbot Columban came forth, in the latter part of the sixth century.

When about thirty years old, he felt an impulse to go out amidst difficulties and dangers, to publish the gospel, and to plant christian discipline among savage nations.

In a letter written after suffering persecution in France, he says: "It was my wish to visit the heathen, and to preach the gospel to them."

His pupil and biographer, Jonas, gives the following account: "He began to long after a pilgrim's life, recollecting that command of the Lord, 'Go forth from thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, into a land which I shall show thee.'" He disclosed to Father Columban

the glowing desire of his heart; that longing kindled by the fire of the Lord; that fire of which the Lord says, "I am come to kindle a fire upon the earth." Columban himself says of that holy fire of love, "O that God would grant that He would awaken me out of the sleep of indolence, and so kindle that fire of Divine love, that this Divine flame may always burn within me.

"O that I had the wood with which that fire might be continually nourished, that it might never more be quenched, but always increase within me."

Permission having been granted by the abbot, Columban, with twelve youths who were training under his guidance for ecclesiastics, repaired about the year 590 to France, where, at that time, owing to the continual wars, the political disturbances, the remissness of the worldly-minded bishops, who occupied themselves more about worldly business than about spiritual concerns, the greatest confusion and irregularity prevailed; among the monastic orders, especially, great degeneracy had spread, many convents having been given away by the princes to laymen of rank.

The strict piety and superior knowledge of Columban obtained so much the greater reverence for him among a disorderly and ignorant multiude. He was requested to settle in the kingdom of Burgundy, and might have obtained a convent, in which he could have lived with his scholars in quiet comfort and great respectability. But he declared that he did not seek for earthly goods, but felt himself compelled to obey the words of Christ: "Whoever will be my disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me."

He now betook himself to an immense wilderness in the Vosges, and chose for his settlement the ruins of an ancient dilapidated castle called Anegray.

As the monks were obliged to bring the land into a state of cultivation, at first they often suffered hunger; but Columban, even under such circumstances where human succor was wanting, maintained an unwavering confidence in God, which could never be put to shame.

At one time they had nothing to eat, but the bark of trees,

and wild herbs, and their destitution was the more pressing, because one of their number was ill, for whose restoration they could do nothing. Three days they had spent in prayer to obtain relief for their sick brother, when they saw a man standing at the door of the convent, whose horses were laden with sacks full of provisions. He told them that he felt obliged by a sudden impulse to assist with his means those who from love to Christ endured such privations in the wilderness.

Another time they had for nine days suffered similar want, when the heart of another abbot was moved to send them provisions. When a foreign priest once visited them, and expressed his surprise that Columban could feel so easy, although he had so little corn in his granary, he replied: "If people faithfully serve their Creator, they will suffer no want; as it is written in the Psalms, 'I have never seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.'

"He who could satisfy five thousand men with five loaves, can easily fill our barns with meal."

To great power and activity for practical purposes, Columban joined a disposition for religious contemplation, taking delight in inward quiet; and the union in him of these two qualities, as in many pious men of that age, is a proof of his healthy christian simplicity, of a soul resting firmly on God. He frequently went into the depths of the forest, carrying a bible on his shoulder, and read as he walked, and meditated on what he read, or sat down, with the bible in his hand, on the hollow trunk of a tree.

On Sundays and feast days, he gladly retired to a cave or some other secret place, and gave himself up entirely to prayer, and meditation on Divine things.

Such was the reverence in which he was held, that persons of all ranks flocked to him, and committed themselves to his guidance, or brought their sons to him for education. The number of monks was so great that one convent was not sufficient, and they were obliged to build two others, which were also located in forests—Luxeuil, in Franche Comté, and Fontenay.

It strikes us singularly that these men should thus have retired from the world, for the purpose of doing good, when a holy life among people would have so increased and widened their influence; but we must remember they belonged to a less enlightened age than this, when, even the best of men were somewhat tinctured with superstition.

As the highest object to which all the monastic regulations of Columban were adapted to form those who were placed under his guidance, he regarded self-denial, the total surrender of the will to God. In his instructions to the monks, he says many admirable things respecting this highest aim of internal improvement, this great concern of christian sanctification, the one thing needful: "Whoever overcomes himself, treads the world under foot. No one who spares himself can hate the world. We must willingly surrender for Christ's sake what we love out of Christ. First of all, if it is necessary, our bodily life must be surrendered by martyrdom for Christ. Or if the opportunity be wanting for such blessedness, the mortification of the will must not fail, so that they who live henceforth, live not unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them.

"Let us be Christ's, not our own; we are bought at a dear price, truly so; for the Master gave himself for the servant, the king for his attendants, God for man."

Although these quotations express the genuine spirit of christian self-denial combined with love, yet this spirit did not show itself unalloyed in the monastic institutions that were founded by Columban.

Though love predominated in his own disposition, and he strove to train his monks to the free love of the children of God, yet they were subjected to a severe legal discipline. They were obliged to exercise self-denial in the total annihilation of their own will, in slavish subjection to a foreign human will, which presented itself to them only as the organ of the Lord for their guidance.

As instruments without wills of their own, they were to serve their superiors, in whom they believed that they saw the Lord himself, who guided them by their means.

It was this spirit of making religion a matter of outward regulation, of mechanical obedience, which prevailed in the ages before the Reformation, until at that period the sign was given of the restoration of the liberty gained by Christ for his people.

True humility refers itself to our relation to God in a sense that is applicable to no creature whatever.

He who humbles himself before God, for that very reason, humbles himself before no man, though ready to serve every man on his own stand-point in free love. He who bows his knee before God, bows it, for that reason, before no man.

The spirit of true freedom is grounded in genuine humility; as the apostle says: "Ye are bought with a price; be not the servants of men." According to that false conception of a mind fettered by externals, as man, instead of subjecting his own will to God alone with inward self-renunciation, and letting himself act in the free self-determination of his own spirit, makes his own will subject to another man, by whom he lets himself be determined in all things,—the very opposite of that line of conduct which the apostle enjoins in those words.

Columban, in his instructions to those under his care, gives them the consolation that by that blind obedience they obtained so much greater rest and security, since, in every thing which they did by the command of another, they were free from responsibility, and the blame would fall on the individual from whom they had received commands, according to *his* calling, while *their* calling was only to obey. This gratifies the indolence of man, who would gladly be exempted from personal conflict, and from that personal probation to which he is destined.

But the Divine plan of educating the human race is contrary to this, since man, having reached his majority, must attain by means of christianity, walking in the light of his God, freely to prove all things with an enlightened reason, according to the word of God, and to determine his conduct according to the law inscribed by the Spirit on his regenerated heart, apart from outward guardianship.

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What Columban prescribes to his pupils as their aim, "that man should always be dependent on the mouth of another," is contrary to the spirit and genius of christianity, which teaches man to depend only on the mouth of God. It is always a perilous matter to attempt to break the will of man by the strict discipline that was employed in the instance before us; for the human will can only be truly subjected and transformed by the power of God, by the might of love, acting inwardly, so that, giving itself up in its self-hood, it regains itself in a higher manner, as the renovated organ of the Divine will. Frequently from the point of view assumed by the monkish system, the striving after a proper free development, which is implanted in a rational being, created after the likeness of God,—the feeling that stirs powerfully in the breast of the young that he is created for God's likeness and glory, becomes confounded with a sinful, self-seeking striving, which indeed early attaches itself to it. Thus, the despotic compulsion which can not distinguish one from the other, by powerfully repressing the proper, free development, produces a crippled, stunted being. The self-will, which is not to be subdued by human power, may either give birth to a proud high-mindedness, called forth into so much unbending opposition by the compulsion from without; or, if the self-will be broken, all fresh, proper life is destroyed, and there remains an obtuse, slavish spirit, unsusceptible of every thing higher; or, such a distortion is the result that, with that slavish spirit is combined a pride, veiled in the garb of humility,—that sham humility of which Paul speaks in Col. ii., 23.

In this respect, what Anselm, of Canterbury, at the end of the eleventh century, said against the rigid monastic discipline is admirable.

An abbot complained, in conversation with him, of the incorrigible youths, who would not be amended by all the correction he administered.

Anselm replied: "You never cease beating the boys, and what sort of men will they be when they grow up?"

"Stupid and brutish," answered the abbot.

"A good sign for your method of education," said Anselm,

"when you educate men into brutes!" The abbot answered, "Is that our fault? We try to compel them, in all manner of ways, to be better, and effect nothing." "You compel them?" answered Anselm; "tell me, then, I pray you, if you planted a tree in your garden, and enclosed it on all sides, so that it could not spread out its branches in any direction, and, after some years, transplant it in an open space, what kind of tree would it become? Certainly an useless one; with crooked, tangled branches. And whose fault would it be but yours, who trained the tree in this over-compulsory manner?"

But, to form a correct judgment of Columban, we ought not to forget under what circumstances he lived, what men he had to form, and with what difficulties he had to combat.

Multitudes of men were to be governed, to be rescued from the prevailing wildness and licentiousness, and to be trained to industry, to the endurance of difficulties and privations of all kinds, and, as the highest end of all, to a truly spiritual life, devoted to God in self-renunciation.

He himself says, in a letter: "We must reach the city of the living God by the right way, through chastisement of the flesh, contrition of heart, labor of body, and humiliation of spirit, and through our striving, while we do what is our duty, not as if we could merit any thing, and, what is more than all, through the grace of Christ, faith, hope and love."

He says: "Let the monk live in a convent, under the discipline of a father, and in fellowship with many others; that from the former he may learn humility, and by means of the latter, patience; by the one he may learn silent obedience, by the others gentleness; let him not do his own will; let him eat what is offered him; let him have just as much as he receives; let him fulfill the day's work prescribed to him; let him go to bed weary; let him go to sleep while traveling, and, although he has not slept enough, let him be compelled to get up; when he suffers unjustly, let him be silent; let him fear the superior of the convent as a master, and love him as a father."

With all this strictness of discipline, a spirit of paternal

love animated the abbot, and hence, as we see from his early life, many were attached to his person.

He always kept this end in view, so to train those about him, that this punctilious arrangement should not become dead and mechanical; that this strict discipline should not be an insupportable burden, but become a second nature, and that every thing should be easy to them through the spirit of love and resignation.

"If they learn the humility of Christ," said he, "his yoke will be easy, his burden will be light. Heart-humility is the repose of a soul wearied by its conflict with corrupt inclinations, its inward pain. It is its only refuge from so many evils, and the more completely it collects itself into this state from perpetual distraction with outward vanities, so much more entire is its repose; and it is refreshed within, so that even the bitter is sweet, and what before was too hard and too heavy for it."

Columban's instructions show an endeavor to bring Divine things close to the mind, and if we see how easily those who had to gain their daily bread by hard labor,—how easily, under the endurance of daily toil and earthly anxieties, they would forget the higher objects of the mind and heart, so much more worthy of honor must that man appear who sought to operate on these men by the power of christianity, that in the midst of their conflict with their native rudeness, they might regard the highest interests of the inner man as most important for themselves and others, and to avail themselves of that daily conflict, as a means of exercising self-denial, resignation to God, and unconditional trust in Him. One time, after laying the foundation of the convent of Fontaines, Columban saw sixty monks toiling with hoes, to loosen the soil, in order to prepare it for the future sowing, while only a small quantity of provisions to satisfy the hunger and thirst occasioned by this severe labor, was in the magazine of the convent.

How much was implied here!

Here we see the power of faith, which can remove mountains. Others would have lost all pleasure and power for

labor under such great difficulties and gloomy prospects, but Columban's strong faith inspired those who were under him, with courage and power.

They would experience that faith multiplies what a man has, and can create means where they are wanting, since it fills the heart of man with courage, power, and joy; as, on the contrary, unbelieving despondency lessens the gifts of God, since it weakens power, makes earthly wants doubly felt, and when the soul is given up to this feeling, it sinks down to earth, and adds anxiety for the future to the destitution of the present moment.

Columban every where expresses his ardent love for his Redeemer.

"Let no one," he says, "live to himself, but let every one live only to Christ. If thou truly lovest Christ, then seek not thy own, but his honor. Love not thyself, nor the world, but Christ alone."

He requires of the true monk, that he should unite steadfastness and power, with gentleness and humility, in the conflict for truth and righteousness against the high and mighty ones of the world,—that he should be ready to contend for what is essential—that he should be humble toward those who are cast down, but honestly oppose the high-minded,—that he should be bold in the cause of truth—that he should show himself obliging and compliant toward the good, but invincible in conflict with the wicked.

In this spirit, Columban himself acted, in contending for christian freedom and christian moral discipline.

By his zeal for the latter, and against the irregularities which had spread among the Frankish churches, and by his frankness, he necessarily made himself many enemies among persons of influence, both ecclesiastics and laymen, who gladly availed themselves of an opportunity to get rid of so troublesome a person.

He had brought with him several peculiar usages of the Romish church, which had been universally adopted in those parts. As his convents in the forests formed a secluded whole, unconnected with others, he wished to follow the

practices of his fathers, and not to submit to the prevalent practice of the church.

He might, indeed, have conceded certain external things, not of any importance in themselves, for the sake of securing what was more essential; but it was an object of some importance to him, to place himself in opposition to an arrogant ecclesiastical authority, which refused to acknowledge the rights of christian liberty, and aimed by its enactments, to force an uniformity in outward things. His enemies gladly availed themselves of this departure from the prevailing church usages, to excite a prejudice against him.

He by no means wished to introduce all the usages relating to Divine worship which he had brought from Ireland, though he believed they were preferable; all he desired was, that he should be at liberty to follow his own method with the convents under his superintendence.

With christian frankness, subjecting himself to no human authority in matters of religion, he addressed a letter to the bishop of Rome, Gregory the Great.

He called on him not to bind himself by the authority of the earlier Roman bishops, but to examine freely, and to adopt whatever he found to be best. "In such a matter," he wrote to him, "you must not depend merely on your humility, or the dignity of the person, which often deceives. In such inquiries, perhaps, "a living dog is better than a dead lion.

Living saints may improve what had not been improved by a greater than themselves in a former age."

Gregory, in a case which required a free examination of the truth, was not justified in a humility which would not permit him to submit the enactments of his predecessors to a fresh examination.

At a later period, he wrote to the Roman bishop, Boniface IV., saying, that as they were connected with one another by unity of faith,—since they agreed in believing with the heart, and confessing with the mouth, one Father in Heaven, of whom are all things, and one Redeemer, the Son of God, through whom are all things, and one Holy Spirit, in whom

are all things, he hoped it might be granted to him and his associates, without injury to the peace of the church, to continue in their own usages; as in former times, Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, and Anicetus, bishop of Rome, without injury to the faith, separated from one another with uninterrupted loves, and each one adhered to the customs he had received.

About the year 602, a Frankish synod was held to deliberate on this matter, and Columban addressed an epistle to it, full of zeal for the welfare of the church.

As, partly owing to political disturbances in the kingdom of the Franks, and partly to the remissness of the bishops, who had involved themselves too much in worldly concerns, the salutary institution of provincial synods had been for a long time neglected, Columban thanked God that the disputes with him had led to summoning such a synod; and he prayed God to grant that they might, on this occasion, be occupied with more important things relative to faith and practice. On this occasion he asserted, with all respect to his opponents, the great truth that if they did not evince by their lives that they had heard the true voice of the Shepherd, and follow him, they could not expect that those words which they uttered only as hirelings could meet with obedience.

An attack from another quarter led to important consequences for Columban. He was held in great respect by Thierry II., the King of Burgundy, where his convents were situated. He availed himself of this to administer reproof to the king, on account of his voluptuous life, and to urge him to a better course. But his influence on this side came into collision with the policy of the powerful grandmother of this prince, Brunehault—and she laid a plan, with the nobles and prelates, to whom Columban's proximity had long been offensive, to drive him away. It was not his manner to evade the machinations that were formed against him.

In accordance with his maxim "to be bold in the cause of truth, and unconquerable by evil," he met the plot with unbending firmness. At last, after five and twenty years of activity, he was banished from the country in the year 610.

Orders were at first given that he should be sent back to Ireland, but peculiar circumstances prevented their execution.

In his journeying through France, he met with many consolatory proofs that God was with him.

When he had arrived with his followers at the city of Nantes and was occupied with meditating in his cell, a beggar came before it. Columban caused the last measure of meal in his stores to be given to the hungry man.

The two following days he was obliged to contend with want himself, and continued joyful in faith and hope, when suddenly some one knocked at the door, and it was the servant of a pious female of the city, whom she had sent with a considerable supply of corn and wine for him.

From Nantes he wrote an epistle full of paternal love to those he had left behind in France, in which he exhorted them to unity and humility.

He then withdrew into Switzerland, near Tuggen and Pregentia, where he labored several years for the conversion of the Suevi and Alemanni.

Afterward he went to Italy and established, in the vicinity of the Apennines, the famous monastery of Bobbio, where he found rest for the last years of his life.

Still he was active to the last, in order to compose an ecclesiastical division which had existed in Italy from ancient times.

The Emperor Justinian, who, by his indiscreet and despotic interference in church affairs, by his strong inclination to exercise his imperial power in making theologians instead of faithfully fulfilling the duties of his office, had caused such great disorders in the Greek church, had also allowed himself to be moved, by the intrigues of a troublesome theological court-faction, publicly to brand as heretical the memory of the three great Syrian fathers of the church, Theodorus, Thesdoret, and Ibas, and the vascillating, weak-minded Roman bishop, Vigilius, had allowed himself to be compelled to favor the foolish undertaking of the emperor.

As the later Roman bishops followed the decision of their predecessor, a division of the church in Italy was the conse

quence; for several churches in Istria and the Venetian territory disapproved of this decision.

Many accusations against the orthodoxy of the Roman church were occasioned by it.

Columban now wrote a very respectful, but at the same time very frank epistle, to Pope Boniface IV., in which he required from him an unprejudiced examination of this affair, and pressed upon him to take measures for restoring the peace of the church.

"Watch," he writes to him, "first of all over the faith, and then to command the works of faith, and to root out vices; for your vigilance will be the salvation of many.

Our concern here is not persons, but the truth.

As in virtue of the dignity of your church, you are held in great honor; you need to take greater, not to lessen your dignity by any aberration; for the power will remain with you as long as you are in the right way. He is a true key bearer of the kingdom of Heaven, who by true knowledge opens it to the worthy, and shuts it against the unworthy."

Then follows a beautiful exhortation which applies to so many divisions which arise from laying greater stress on subordinate differences than on unity in the essentials of faith, and thus the bond of love was broken.

"Quickly return," says he, "to unity, and not prolong old controversies; but rather be silent, and consign these controversies to everlasting oblivion.

"When any thing is doubtful, reserve it for the decision of God. But what is clear, or what man can judge, decide justly upon it without respect of persons.

"Mutually acknowledge one another, that there may be joy in heaven and earth over your peace and union."

He thus continued fruitful in works of faith and labors of love, till he died in his seventy-second year, or a little older, after having in the course of an active and very laborious life, scattered the seeds of christian knowledge in France, Switzerland and Italy; and, by the scholars whom he left behind him, made provision for its still wider propagation in succeeding ages.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Gallus, the Apostle of Switzerland.

SUCCESS OF GALLUS PROMOTED BY HIS FAMILIAR INTERCOURSE WITH THE PEOPLE; FOUNDS AN INSTITUTION, AND BECOMES A TEACHER.

AMONG the scholars whom Columban brought with him from Ireland to France, Gallus was one of the most distinguished.

He was early intrusted by his parents to that venerable teacher, to be educated for the service of the kingdom of God. Columban, as we have seen, was a zealous student of the Scriptures, and deeply imbued the mind of youth with a love for acquaintance with the sacred volume.

He knew how to discourse from the Scriptures with simplicity and fervor, and to apply the Word to the hearts of men.

When with his associates, he met with a hospitable reception from pious persons, and after laying down his luggage, wished to have some portion of Scripture read; he called on his favorite scholar, Gallus, to perform this office, and at the same time to explain what was read.

When, they took up their residence among the ruins of the ancient castle of Bregenz, they met with an old dilapidated chapel, which they resolved to consecrate for christian worship, and in which they constructed their cells.

But they found in that chapel three gilded images of idols which the pagans worshipped as tutelary divinities.

As Gallus, during his residence in the Frankish territory, had made himself well acquainted with the German language, Columban permitted him to preach the Gospel to a numerous multitude who had flocked together to witness the consecration.

It is indeed a true saying of Luther's, "It is God's work alone to banish idols from the human heart; whatever comes from without is a farce"

If men are deprived of some of their idols, they will manufacture others.

But when the preaching of Divine grace opens a way to the heart, it will facilitate, if the sensible impression to which idolatry cleaves be taken away.

Thus Gallus confirmed the impression that his discourse made, by dashing in pieces the images before the eyes of the wild pagan multitude, and thus giving them ocular demonstration of the nothingness and weakness of their false gods.

At this place the people occupied themselves with gardening and planting fruit trees. Gallus wove nets, and attended to fishing.

His success was so great that he not only supplied those about him, but entertained strangers, and made many presents. A similar instance is given in the life of Bishop Wilfred, who preached the Gospel in Sussex, toward the close of the seventh century. When he first went there, a famine prevailed; the sea and the rivers were full of fish, but the people only knew how to catch eels. He collected all the nets, and instructed them in fishing, till they caught three hundred different kinds. One hundred of these he kept for his own people, a hundred he gave to the owners of the net, and the remaining hundred to the poor.

By this means he won the love of the people; and as they were so much indebted to him for their temporal welfare, they listened to him more willingly when he discoursed of heavenly things.

When they were expelled from the region, and the Abbot Columban was proceeding to Italy, Gallus was prevented from following him by illness; and this circumstance proved a great blessing to the people among whom he had been residing; for otherwise Gallus would not have been to them what he actually became.

Being thus left behind, he betook himself with his fishing nets to a priest named Willimar, who lived in an old castle, and had already received him hospitably with Columban, and assigned them their residences.

After he had been restored to health by this person's affec-

tionate care, he wished to find out a place in the forest for building and cultivating.

He, therefore, applied to the deacon, Hillibald, whose business it was to supply his people with fish and birds, who hence frequently traversed the woods, and was well acquainted with the paths. In company with him, he wished to find out a suitable place for building, with good water.

The deacon gave him a fearful description of the multitude of wild beasts in the forest; but Gallus answered him, with the confidence of one who thought himself scripturally right, saying, "It is an expression of the apostles, 'If God be for us, who can be against us?'"

Has he not said that "all things work together for good to them that love God;" and He who preserved Daniel in the lion's den can deliver me from the power of the wild beasts."

"Put only some bread and a little net in your knapsack," said the deacon, "to-morrow I will take you into the forest, that God, who has brought you here to us from a distant land, will also send his angel with us, as he once did with Tobias, and show us a place answering to your pious wishes."

Gallus prepared himself for his journey, as every true christian would, with prayer. When they had traveled till two or three o'clock, Hillibald said, "let us now take some bread and water, that we may be strengthened to pursue the rest of our way." Gallus answered, "Do what is necessary for your own strengthening; I am resolved to taste nothing, till God has pointed out to me the desired place of rest." But the deacon answered, "No; we will share the discomfort together, and then the joy."

They proceeded till toward evening, when they came to a stream, full of fish, where they succeeded in taking a quantity, when the deacon made a fire, broiled some, and prepared his bread.

Meanwhile, Gallus, more intent upon heavenly manna, had retired to a thicket for spiritual contemplation and prayer. Thus engaged, he accidentally fell, which circumstance attracted the attention of the deacon, who hastened to help him; but he refused his aid, saying, "Let me alone; this is my

resting-place for life: here will I dwell." He consecrated the place by prayer, and, after he had risen up, he made a cross with a small twig, planted it in the earth, around which they both knelt to pray. On this spot was erected a building, afterward called by his name, in which he labored for the education of youth, by whom the seeds of christian knowledge were scattered abroad still wider, and temporal and spiritual benefits diffused among the people.

When he received presents from wealthy individuals, he assembled crowds of poor people in the district, and distributed among them what he had thus obtained.

On one such occasion, one of his scholars said to him: "My father, I have a costly silver vessel, beautifully enchased; if you approve, I will reserve it, that it may be used at the Lord's Supper." But Gallus answered: "My son, think of Peter's words, 'Gold and silver have I none;' and, in order that you may not act contrary to so wholesome an example, hasten and dispose of it for the good of the poor; my teacher, Columban, used to distribute the Lord's body in a vessel of brass."

The vacant bishopric of Cosnitz was offered to Gallus, but he preferred discharging the quiet duties of a teacher, and, therefore, declined the office.

He obtained the appointment for the deacon, Johannes, a native of the country, who studied the Scriptures under him.

At the consecration of the bishop, a great multitude of persons came from all quarters, when Gallus availed himself of the opportunity to impress upon the hearts of those who had recently been converted to christianity, the love of God, as exhibited in creation and redemption; and to trace, in a connected manner, the leadings of God's providence for the salvation of mankind.

He entered the pulpit with his late scholar, Johannes, who interpreted to the people in German a discourse which he delivered in Latin.

Speaking of the creation, he said: "God created beings endowed with reason, to praise him, and to be happy from him in him, and through him. You ought to know the

cause of your creation, my christian brethren, in order that you may not regard yourselves as reprobate beings, and abdicate your dignity by living below your privilege."

He then deduced the origin of evil from the desire of rational beings to have in themselves the ground of their being, life and happiness; hence arises that internal emptiness, since the creature, turning away from the fountain of life, and left to itself, must fall from fullness to emptiness, from reality to nothingness.

Thus was the fundamental principle of the christian life, —*union with Christ*,—taught by this man.

No extended history is given of his life, nor any thing of his death; but, doubtless, he who observed the calls of Providence while in the world bowed submissively to the heavenly mandate at last, rejoicing to close the scene of his earthly labors when his Divine Master had nothing more for him to do, and pass to that land where the weary spirit finds grateful rest, yet free and joyful activity in a better and more perfect service.

CHAPTER XIX.

Boniface, the Apostle of the Germans.

EARLY TRAINING AND STRONG DESIRE TO PREACH THE GOSPEL; TEMPER OF HIS SPIRIT INDICATED IN HIS WRITINGS; MANNER OF HIS DEATH.

BONIFACE, or *Winifred*, according to the Anglo-Saxon, was born at Crediton, in Devonshire, in the year 680, and deserved to be honored as the father of the German church, though he was by no means the first who brought the seeds of the gospel into Germany.

Many had already labored in that field before him, but the efforts of scattered and isolated individuals were not sufficient to secure the continued propagation of christianity.

Settled ecclesiastical institutions required to be added, and this was first effected by Boniface, from whose agency the salvation of so many proceeded, even down to the present time.

The seeds of religion were early developed in his heart. As in England, the custom had been kept up, which was introduced by the first pious Irish missionaries, for the clergy to visit the houses of the laity, and to deliver discourses on religious subjects before their families; the children, in such cases, often listened attentively, and they gladly conversed with them on the things of religion. His father tried to repress his inclination for the ecclesiastical profession, as he had intended him for a post of secular distinction.

But, as it often happens, the inclination which his father aimed to subdue only acquired greater force; and, at last the impression of a severe illness induces his father to give up further opposition to his son's views.

He was, therefore, educated in several English convents, where he became intimately acquainted with the Holy Scriptures, which were to be a light to his path in after life, among the savage tribes.

His mind was certainly narrowed during this period by many prejudices, which kept him from the pure knowledge of Scripture doctrine, and which must necessarily have been a hindrance to him in his missionary labors; for the more pure and free, and unmixed with human schemes, christianity is, the more easily it makes its way into the hearts of men, and the more easily can it preserve in undiminished vigor its Divine attractive power over human nature.

The missionary requires especially the spirit of christian freedom, that he may not obstruct the word of God in the soul by human alloy, or prevent Christ, whose organ alone he ought to be, from obtaining in every nation that peculiar form which is exactly suitable to each one.

This stand-point Boniface certainly did not occupy, and it was, during this whole period, unknown in the development of the church.

The nations were obliged, first of all, to receive christianity

in the form of a definite, visible church, which had built many foreign materials on the one foundation, which is Christ, and to admit among them the great building of the Roman church, in order to develop themselves under its guardianship to the maturity of manhood in Christ; but, at last, were led by Luther from the guardianship of the church to Christ, whom alone to serve, and on whom alone to depend is true freedom.

When Boniface had completed his five and thirtieth year, he felt himself excited by the example of other missionaries among his countrymen to carry the message of the gospel to the heathen.

What would have become of our fatherland, if God had not by his spirit awakened that missionary zeal, especially in England and Ireland? And, as we now look back with gratitude on the labors of those heroes of the faith, to whom we owe the blessings of christianity and of all mental culture, so, hereafter, the churches gathered from among the heathen in South India, Asia and Africa, when they have received through christianity the abundance of all earthly and heavenly good, will look back with gratitude on the commencing of missionary zeal with us at a later time.

An English priest, Egbert, gave the first impulse to this missionary movement.

In a dangerous illness he made a vow, that if his life were spared, he would devote it to the service of the Lord among foreign nations. After this, he decided, with several of his associates, to visit the German tribes; but when on the point of sailing, he was prevented, by several circumstances, from accompanying them, though he must be still regarded as the prime mover in the undertaking.

Boniface himself informs us, that an impulse natural to his nation contributed, with the religious interest, to impel him to missionary labor—in other words, a passion for foreign travel, and the fear of Christ, as he expresses it in one of his letters.

He terms it the fear of Christ, since he regarded it as a debt due to the heathen, an obligation laid upon him by

Christ, which he believed himself bound to fulfill; he would have exclaimed with the apostle Paul, "Woe is me, if I preach not the gospel!"

First of all, he assisted in his labors the zealous Willibrord, one of those missionaries who followed the impulse given by Egbert, and founded the church in East Friesland, and the Netherlands.

He wished to have retained Boniface near him, that he might be his successor as archbishop of Utrecht; but he declined compliance, feeling compelled by an inward call to begin a fresh work among the heathen tribes of Germany.

The value he set upon the Holy Scriptures is shown in the following words, addressed to a young man in his native land, whom he exhorted to a study of the Bible: "Throw aside every thing that hinders you, and direct your whole study to the Holy Scriptures, and there seek that Divine wisdom which is more precious than gold; for what is it more seemly in youth to strive after, or what can age possess more valuable than that knowledge which will guide our souls, without danger of being shipwrecked in the storm, to the shores of the heavenly Paradise, to the eternal joys of angels?"

To an abbess who had sent him a bible, he wrote in return, "that she had consoled him when banished to Germany, with spiritual light; for whoever is obliged to visit the dark corners of the German people falls into the jaws of death, unless he has the Word of God as a lamp to his feet, and a light to his path."

He requested his old friend, Daniel, bishop of Winchester, to send him a manuscript of the prophets, left behind by his deceased abbot and teacher, Wimbert, which was written in very plain and distinct characters. "If God incline you to grant this request," he wrote to him, "you can render no greater comfort to my old age; for in this country I can not obtain such a manuscript as I wish for, and with my already weak eyesight I can not distinguish small and closely-written characters."

Boniface availed himself of the aids of the secular power

in order to protect his churches from the devastations of the rude pagans; to secure the lives of those he sent for to his native land; to instruct the pagans, and to educate the converts.

What effect he could produce upon uninstructed men by external impressions, is shown by a singular incident:

When he was preaching the gospel at Hesse, at Geismar, in the department of Gudenburg, a sacred oak of immense size, and dedicated to Thor, the god of thunder, filled the minds of the people with the greatest awe, and powerfully counteracted the impressions made by his sermons.

The people could not divest themselves of their belief in the Divine power of this oak; and hence, though the discourses of Boniface might take a momentary effect upon them, they quickly relapsed into paganism. By the advice of some Hessian christians he went with a few of his associates to the oak. He himself began to hew it down with an axe, while a crowd of infuriated pagans stood around. When they saw it fall asunder in four parts, and that their god could take no vengeance on Boniface, their delusion was at once broken up.

In order to perpetuate the impression of this event, Boniface made use of the timber of this tree in building a chapel.

It was always a principal object with Boniface to operate on the minds of the young by religious instruction and a christian education.

His zealous anxiety for the educational institutions connected with the convents, not to mention other proofs, amply refuted the reproach cast upon him, that he had effected the outward conversion of the people in a compulsory manner, merely by the secular power, though he did not refuse it as an auxiliary in carrying out his plans.

He deeply felt the greatness and responsibility of his calling as archbishop of the German church; but too much devoted to the pope, though by no means afraid to speak the truth to him candidly, when the interests of the newly planted church required it.

A remnant of the ancient pagan superstitious usages and

excesses on New-year's day, was still retained at Rome. Amulets were worn by the women, and offered for sale. As people belonging to the new churches frequently visited Rome, they believed that such abuses, which fell under the eyes of the pope, received his sanction, and consequently murmured at Boniface, who so zealously tried to suppress all heathenish superstitions and usages. Boniface made strong representations to the pope on the subject. "Men devoted to the senses," he wrote to him, "ignorant Germans, Bavarians, or Franks, think, if they see any of those evil practices which we forbid, indulged in at Rome, that they are sanctioned by the priests; then they reproach us, and are offended, and thus our preaching and instruction are hindered."

The efficiency of Boniface was, however, somewhat impaired, because the freedom of the children of God, in its whole extent, was not known to him,—the freedom of those who are dead with Christ to the element of the world, whose life no more belongs to this world, but is hid with Christ in God, belonging to heaven, and therefore can be no longer entangled with the ordinances of this world. He knew, indeed, the ground of inward christianity, and possessed it in his inner life; here he had more than he could express in words, since his knowledge, intellectually considered, was not developed in proportion to his life of faith.

He built on the right foundation, which is Christ, and therefore his work as being Divine, would stand and develop itself through Divine power in succeeding ages, and would be purified in the fire; but on this foundation he had built not pure gold alone, but also wood, hay and stubble. Yet it must be said, in his behalf, that he was not the author of this mixture of heterogeneous materials, but it belonged to his age.

The fire kindled by the Lord at the Reformation was requisite to consume these foreign things, so that the foundation might shine forth with its genuine lustre.

The language in which Paul addresses the Galatians, was applicable in a certain sense to the whole church at this period.

"Having begun in the spirit, are ye now made perfect in the flesh? How turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements of the world, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?"

But we also recognize in this development of the church, the guiding wisdom of its invisible Ruler, who permitted it to happen, that rude humanity should be again placed under the law as a schoolmaster, that it might be trained to the righteousness of faith, to the gospel of the spirit, as this was about to appear at the Reformation in all its clearness, in contrariety to that confused mixture of the law and gospel. Underneath that shell of ordinances relating to outward things, the kernel of the gospel was still preserved, and it needed only the shell to be broken for the kernel to be exhibited in all its purity.

And from the time that mixture of law and gospel spread in the church, and the things of the spirit were involved in outward ordinances, the spirit of the gospel always aroused individual witnesses to whom the things of the spirit were revealed in their purity, and who felt themselves compelled to combat that bondage to the rudiments of this world.

They were the lights that appeared in a dark place, till the day dawned and the morning star arose on the church of God.

Boniface, at the advanced age of seventy years, was not willing to pass his last days in self-indulgent repose.

When he could with confidence leave his follower, Lull, to carry on the work in Germany, christian love impelled him to go where there was a deficiency of laborers, where severe conflicts for the gospel were still to be waged.

The intention of laboring for the conversion of the inhabitants of Friesland, for whom nothing had been done since the labors carried on for fifty years by the zealous Willifred, and the greater part of whom are still pagans; this intention had never left him, and now when there was nothing more for him to do in Germany, it was revived with fresh vigor. He took leave of his follower, Lull, saying, "I can not do otherwise; I must go whither the impulse of my heart leads me, for the time of my departure is at hand; soon shall I be

freed from this body, and obtain a crown of eternal glory. But you, my dearest son, carry on to perfection the founding of the churches which I began in Thuringia; complete the building of the church in Fulder, and may that be the resting place of my body, bowed down with years."

He summoned up the remaining powers of his old age, which were invigorated by the inspiration of faith, traveled through Friesland in his seventieth year, with youthful vigor, preached, converted and baptized thousands, destroyed idolatrous temples, and founded churches.

The persons baptized had dispersed, and were all to assemble again on a certain day, in order to receive confirmation. In the meantime, Boniface and his companions had pitched their tents on the banks of the Burda, not far from Doclingen, on the borders of East and West Friesland. When the morning of the appointed day dawned, Boniface waited with anxiety for the arrival of his new converts. He heard the sound of an approaching multitude, but it was an armed host of infuriated pagans, who had sworn to murder on that day the enemy of their gods. The christian youths in the retinue of Boniface wished to defend, and were on the point of beginning the conflict; but, as soon as he heard the tumult, he went out, accompanied by his clergy, and said to the young men, "Cease fighting, for the Holy Scripture teaches us not to return evil for evil, but with good. I have for a long time earnestly desired this day, and the time of my departure is come.

"Be strong in the Lord, and bear with thankful resignation whatever his Grace sends. Hope in Him, and he will save your souls." To the clergy he said, "My brethren, be of good courage, and be not afraid of those who can kill the body, but can not kill the soul that is destined to eternal life.

"Rejoice in the Lord, and cast the anchor of your hope on Him, who will give you immediately the reward of eternal happiness; endure steadfastly the brief moment of death, that you may reign forever with Christ."

Thus he died, a martyr, on the 5th of June, 755.

CHAPTER XX.

Anschar, the Apostle of the North.

HIS REMARKABLE VISIONS; EFFECT UPON HIM; BOLDNESS IN PREACHING THE GOSPEL IN THE FACE OF DANGERS; SUCCESS WROUGHT BY LOVE.

IF WE compare Boniface and Anschar together, we shall again see an example of two of very different mental constitutions whom the spirit of God, that actuated them, employed as his instruments. In the former there was a resemblance to the Apostle Peter; in the latter to the Apostle John; in the one, there was more of ardent, impetuous power; in the other more of quiet, active love.

Boniface was better fitted to produce great outward effects. It was Anschar's gift not to grow weary of small beginnings, but quietly, with persistive love, to cherish the inconsiderable germs which are important as the commencing point of a plantation that will advance to greatness.

He appears to have received his first religious impressions into his opening mind when a mere child, through the early influence of a pious mother whom he lost in his fifth year; when his father sent him to school, after her death, he fell into the society of rude boys, to whose influence he yielded so much as to forget his early impressions of early piety. Yet still they remained unconsciously hidden in his soul, and in a vision of the night were recalled to him.

"It was as if he found himself in a slippery place, covered with mire, from which he was hardly able to find his way out. But near this place he thought he saw a pleasant path, and in this path he beheld a graceful female, handsomely adorned, and near her several other women in white garments, among whom was his own mother.

When he saw them, he wished to hasten to them, but he could not get out of that slippery place.

When these women were advanced nearer, he thought he heard one who stood at their head, very richly adorned, utter these words: "My son, wilt thou come to thy mother?" And when he answered her eagerly that he was anxious to do so, she said to him again: "If thou wishest to come to our company, thou must guard against all vain waywardness, and diligently pursue a serious course of conduct." After this dream a surprising change came over him, at which his own companions could not sufficiently wonder. Instead of playing, he occupied himself with reading, thinking, and other useful employments. When he afterward became a monk in the French convent of Corbic, and gave himself up most entirely to a monastic life, he had another vision, in which the hidden life with Christ in God was represented. He seemed as if transported to the assembly of the blest. All had their faces toward the east, and celebrating in their hymns of praise, an appearance in the east; and their united songs filled the souls of the hearers with inexpressible delight.

In the east itself was seen a wonderful splendor, an unchangeable light of surpassing brilliance, from which the most beautiful colors shone forth. All the companies of saints, who stood exulting on all sides, drew joy from the sight. "It was such unbounded splendor," says Anschar, "that I could see neither beginning nor end of it. And when I had looked around on all sides, I could see only the superficial appearance, and not what dwelt within the centre of this light. Yet I believe that *He* was there, whom the angels desire to look upon; for from it proceeded an inexpressible glory, by which the whole length and breadth of the assembly of the blest was enlightened. He himself was, in a certain sense, in all, and all were in Him; He himself surrounded all from without, and He was inwardly among them; He satisfied all their wants, and He was their guiding soul. He hovered over them protectively; He was the support which bore them up from beneath. Neither sun nor moon gave light there, nor was heaven or earth to be seen. And yet it was not a brightness which dazzled the eyes of the beholders, but one that imparted to them a pleasurable

sensation. There was nothing corporeal, but the contrary. It was something inexpressible."

When his two guides, Peter and John, had led him in front of this boundless light, a voice, as from the Divine Majesty, which appeared represented to him by this immeasurable, unchangeable light, sounded forth to him, full of inexpressible sweetness: "Go hence, and return to me with the crown of martyrdom." At these words the whole host of those who were praising God were dumb, and then with reverent looks they prayed. But Anschar saw not the face of Him from whom the voice came. "After these words," he says, "I was sad, because I was obliged to return to the world; but, quieted by the promise that I should return from it again hereafter, I went back with my guides. On my return, as well as on my way thither, they said nothing to me, but gave me such a look of tender love as when a mother gazes on her only son.

"And thus I returned again to the body. In going and returning, there was no effort and no delay; we were immediately where we wished to be. And although I have expressed something of such blessedness, yet I admit that my tongue can never express what my soul experienced.

"But my soul itself felt it not, as it actually was, for it appeared to me to be what no eye had seen, nor ear heard, nor had entered into the heart of man to conceive."

We have represented this vision according to Anschar's own description, because it gives us so deep an insight into the Divine life of a simple christian soul. This vision made a powerful and indelible impression upon him.

It awoke him to a new earnestness in the christian life, and it animated him henceforward with the thought that he was called to die the precious death of a martyr for the faith. Two years after he had another remarkable vision. He had been engaged in prayer in a small chapel to which he was often used to retire for secret devotion, and when he rose from prayer, there entered at the door a person of noble countenance in a Jewish dress, whose eyes shone as if full of light. He immediately thought it was the Lord, and

threw himself at his feet. As he lay prostrate, the apparition called upon him to stand up; and when full of awe he stood before Him, and was not able to look on his countenance for the excessive splendor of the light which beamed from his eyes, the Lord said with a kind voice to him, "Confess thy sins, that thou mayst be justified." He answered, "Lord, why need I say it to thee? thou knowest all; nothing is hid from thee." The Lord said, "I indeed know all things, but yet it is my will that men should confess their sins to me in order that they may receive forgiveness." Thereupon he made confession of sin and knelt down to pray. The Lord then said, "Fear not; I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions." With these words he vanished, and Anschar woke with joyful confidence that his sins were forgiven.

At a later period he was sent with some other monks from the monastery of Corbie as a colony for spreading christianity on the Weser, where he had to conduct a school, and to preach to the people. Under the various difficulties with which this monastery had to combat in a wild and poor district, he had an opportunity of exercising himself in christian patience, and certainly this was a good preparation for his missionary calling. When the Jutland king, Harold, who was baptized at Ingleheim, in the year 826, was returning home from a visit to his ally, Emperor Lewis the Pious, that emperor wished a zealous preacher of the gospel to accompany the Danes, to confirm and promote their faith, and to spread it more widely. It was difficult, however, to find one who was not alarmed by the reports of the wildness of those northmen, and of the evil character of their idolatry. But the Abbot Wala, of the monastery of Corbie, to which Anschar had then returned, informed the emperor that he knew a man of glowing zeal for the cause of God, who even longed to suffer for it. Anschar was called, and was ready to go immediately with Harold to Denmark.

While his abbot visited the court, Anschar prepared himself in the retirement of a vineyard, by reading the Scriptures and prayer for his great calling. He appeared always serious and in deep thought, so that those who could not look

into his interior frame, might imagine that he was afraid of dangers and toils, and repented of the step he had taken.

But it was in him only the consciousness of the greatness and difficulty of the calling that made him serious, since he began the work, not in the arrogance of human self-confidence, but with fear and trembling in dependence on God; he was well aware of his own unworthiness and weakness; he depended only on the power of God, and appearing more quiet and reserved before men, he had turned his whole heart to Him. When one who wished to accompany him in his missionary work, asked him whether he still remained firm to his resolution, he answered, "When I was asked to go for God's name among the heathen, I could not venture to decline such a call. Yes; with all my powers I wish to go hence, and no man can make me waver in the resolution."

The most striking points in Anschar's character were his unwearied patience, his winning love, and his steadfast faith, when dangers and obstacles stood in his way.

These distinguishing qualities were tried in a variety of ways from his first entrance on this mission. The Danes whom he accompanied on their return to their native country, appear to have been at that time great strangers to the nature of christianity. Anschar met with rough treatment from them till his arrival at Cologne, when the bishop of that city, Hadelbod, furnished him with a convenient vessel by which he might proceed by sea.

This induced Harold to become his associate, and Anschar now succeeded in subduing the rude manners of the Danes.

King Harold was afterward expelled from his kingdom. Anschar could do nothing more excepting to purchase native children in order to educate them for teachers to the people, and found a little school at Hadeby, in Schleswig, the first christian institution in these regions.

His companion, Autbert, was taken from him by an illness which obliged him to return to his native country. Yet these untoward circumstances could not turn him aside—a proof how free he was from self; for the more self-love is mingled with zeal, flowing even from the purest fountain, so

much more restless and impatient it is to see the fruit of its own labors. In proportion as zeal is purified from the alloy of self, it carries on the work of God, in the consciousness that "neither is he that planteth any thing, nor he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase;" it will leave to Him when and where to give that increase.

While in this unfavorable situation he received a call to a new missionary undertaking in Sweden, and he immediately complied with it, convinced that it came from God. He proceeded to that country in a merchant vessel, as an ambassador from king Lewis the Pious, with presents for the king of that place. They were attacked by pirates, and lost every thing; with great difficulty they gained the shore and saved their lives. Several of Anschar's companions wished to return, but he declared "that what might happen to him was in God's hands, but that he had made up his mind not to return until he had discovered whether it was God's will that the gospel should be published there."

At a later period he was suddenly fallen upon in the seat of his diocese, at Hamburg, by the pagan Normans; he lost every thing, and saved himself with the greatest difficulty. He was obliged to take refuge on the estate of a pious female of rank in Holstein: but as soon as he could find safety and quiet in his own diocese, he was immediately intent on widening the sphere of his labors.

The unfavorable prospect, on account of the enmity of Horick, the reigning sovereign of Denmark, who had taken a principal part in those incursions into the diocese of Hamburg, could not deter him. He knew the omnipotence of love; he prayed continually for the conversion and salvation of those who threatened destruction to him and all christians with fire and sword. He allowed himself to be employed by king Lewis, of Germany, as an ambassador to king Horick; he made him presents, won his heart by love, and, at last, Horick placed such confidence in him that he would treat only through him with the German empire; and he then made use of this personal attachment of the king to accomplish something for the christian church. He obtained permission from

him to erect a church in the town of Schleswig, which as a mart of commerce, was peculiarly fitted to spread christianity further inland. He also procured from this king a letter of introduction to the Swedish king, Olof. Horick wrote to the effect that "he had never in his life seen so good a man; that he never found one so trustworthy; and, since he had found so much goodness in him, he had permitted him to undertake what he wished in reference to christianity in his own land, and he hoped that king Olof would also permit him to publish the gospel in his kingdom, for he certainly wished to effect nothing but what was good and right."

When Anschar arrived in Sweden, he found the pagans greatly opposed to the strange religion. His friends advised him only to make use of the presents he had brought with him, in order to rescue his life from the impending danger. But Anschar answered, "I would give nothing here to redeem my life; for, if the Lord has so determined, I am ready to suffer tortures and even death here for his name's sake." He invited the king to an entertainment, gave him the presents, and won his heart, for he knew well how to become all things to all men; and afterward the Lord helped him in the way which his infinite wisdom had opened for him.

Anschar experienced many wonderful answers to prayer in the course of his laborious and dangerous ministry. This was known, and many sick persons came to him to obtain a cure by his prayers. But he himself disowned the reputation of a worker of miracles, and said: "If I were thought worthy before my God of that, I would beseech him to grant me this miracle, that by his grace he would make of me a holy man."

When, after four and thirty years' labor, in his sixty-fourth year, he came to his end through the sufferings of a painful malady, he frequently said, with Job, "Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" After receiving the Holy Supper, he raised his hands to heaven and prayed that the grace of God might forgive every one who had in any way injured him. He then frequently repeated the words, "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness. Be merciful to me, a sinner. Into thy

hands I commend my spirit." And, after he had commended his spirit to the grace of God, looking toward heaven, he left this world, in the year 865.

CHAPTER XXI.

Gregory, Abbot of Utrecht.

EAGERLY LISTENS TO THE INSTRUCTIONS OF BONIFACE, AND FOLLOWS HIM; DIES IN THE CHURCH, AT AN ADVANCED AGE.

BONIFACE took a peculiar interest in the young, and, in this instance, sowed the seed which, after his death, brought forth abundant fruit. He left behind him those who, having been educated and trained by him, continued to labor in different spheres and the same spirit.

Among these, his scholars, the abbot, Gregory, distinguished himself. The manner in which Boniface first became connected with him shows, in a remarkable manner, with what power he could operate on youthful minds.

When Boniface left his first field of labor in Friesland, and was travelling to Hesse, he came to a nunnery, situate on the Moselle, in the territory of Triers, where he was hospitably received by the abbess Addula.

It was a custom of the times to read a portion of the Scriptures during meals. For this office the abbess chose her grandson, a lad of fifteen years, just returned from school. After Boniface had pronounced the blessing, the youth read out of the Latin Bible. Boniface thought he observed marks of intelligence in his countenance; and, when he had finished, said, "You read well, my son, but do you understand what you read?" The youth, who did not catch his meaning, said certainly, he well understood what he had been reading. "Then, tell me," said Boniface, "how you understand it." The youth began to read it over again, when Boniface interrupted him by saying, "No, my son, that is not what I mean:

I know very well that you can read it; but you must give me, in your mother tongue, what you have read." The youth acknowledged that he was not able. "Shall I, then, tell you what it is?" said Boniface; and, when the youth requested him to do so, he let him read the whole once more, distinctly, and then he himself translated it into German, and preached upon it before the whole company.

And, as Lindger, a scholar of Gregory, who is the narrator of this incident, tells us, "it was evident from what source these words came; for they pressed with such power and rapidity on Gregory's mind that at a single exhortation of this teacher, hitherto unknown to him, he forgot parents and native land, and at once went up to his grandmother and said, that he wished to go with this man and learn from him to understand the Scriptures."

The abbess tried to keep him back, and represented to him that this person was an entire stranger to him, and that he knew not whither he was going. But, "many waters can not quench love." Gregory was firm to his resolution, and said to his grandmother: "If you will not give me a horse to ride with him, I will follow him on foot." When she saw that something heavenly had touched the youth's heart, she gave him a horse and servant, and allowed him to go with Boniface.

Lindger says, respecting it: "It appears to me that at that time the same spirit was working in this young man which inflamed the apostles, when, at the word of the Lord, they forsook their nets and their father, and followed their Redeemer. This was the work of the Supreme Artificer,—that same Divine Spirit who works all in all, imparting to every one as He will."

Gregory from that time followed Boniface wherever he went, amidst all his dangers and toils, as a most faithful scholar. He traveled with him at a later period to Rome, and brought back bibles with him, which he used in the instruction of youth. He also accompanied him on his last journey to Friesland, and, after his teacher's martyrdom labored much for the spread of the gospel and christian edu-

cation in Friesland, as abbot of a monastery at Utrecht. He took great pains especially in preparing missionaries and teachers.

Young men from France, England, Friesland, Saxony, Suabia and Bavaria were here united by the bond of holy love, and formed into a nursery for the kingdom of God; and, from this spot preachers of the gospel went forth, in various directions, among tribes that were still pagan, and such as were newly converted to christianity. Early in the morning he sat in his cell with paternal anxiety, and expected each one of his scholars would come to him, to whom he would address out of the Word of God what was exactly suited to the wants and peculiar disposition of each individual.

Frequently, in his sermons, he impressed on his scholars that the new man could make no progress unless the old man was continually dying; and, with this reference, he often quoted the words of the Prophet, Jeremiah: "I have set thee to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build and to plant;" and, connected with it, as an encouragement to the conflict, the promise: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive what God hath prepared for them that love him."

In his seventieth year, three years before his death, he had a stroke of palsy on the left side; but he retained his cheerfulness, went about among his scholars, or was carried by them, and continued to expound the Scriptures and to preach to them, or to distribute among them works for their particular study.

In the last year of his life his lameness had so increased that he was obliged, like John, the apostle, in his old age, to be carried whither he wished by his scholars.

At last, he was confined to his bed, where the bible was read, or psalms sung to him.

He retained his consciousness to the last. His scholars stood around his bed, and comforted one another with the words, "He will not die to-day."

But he summoned up his remaining strength, and said: "To-day you must grant my discharge."

He was carried into the church by his scholars, and placed before the altar, where he prayed, partook of the Lord's Supper, and, anxiously fixing his looks on the altar, there breathed his last.

CHAPTER XXII.

Sturm, of Fulda.

EFFORTS IN FOUNDING A MONASTERY; FINAL SUCCESS, AND LAST FAREWELL TO HIS FRIENDS.

NEXT to Gregory, one of the most able scholars of Boniface was Sturm, descended from a respectable Bavarian family, who was committed to Boniface when a boy, by his parents for education.

After having assisted him for three years in preaching, he was seized with the desire to found a monastery somewhere in one of those wilds which then covered Germany, and which were reclaimed only by the transforming power of christianity.

As Boniface regarded monastic institutions as the principal means of improvement, both for the people and the land, he was well pleased with this proposal. He joined with him two others as companions, and, after praying for them and giving them his blessing, said: "Go into Buchwald: may God enable his servants to prepare a settled habitation in the wilderness."

They wandered for two days through the forest, and saw nothing but the earth, and sky, and immense trees.

On the third day they came to a place which seemed suitable for cultivation, then called Hersfield, or Heroldesfield, and now Herschfeld.

After calling on Christ to give them his blessing, and that this place might be an abode for them, they built small huts

covered with the bark of trees, and remained there for some time.

Sturm returned to his beloved master, for the purpose of giving an exact report to him respecting the situation of the place, the quality of the soil, and the springs.

Boniface did not at once give his opinion, but let him first of all rest, and revived him by spiritual conversation.

He then told him plainly that the spot they had chosen was too much exposed to the incursions of the wild Saxons. Sturm and his companions sought a long time, but could find no place corresponding to the wishes of their bishop. At last Sturm set out alone. He rode on an ass through the wildest parts, singing psalms, and lifting his heart to heaven, or praying with sighs to God.

He rested wherever he happened to be at night-fall. The earth was his bed. With a sword which he carried with him he cut down branches of trees, and with them formed a fence to protect himself from the wild beasts, of which there were great numbers in the forest.

But, after calling on the Lord, and resigning all to him, he would lie down with composure, trusting in the God of heaven to hear and answer his prayer for protection.

On one occasion a troop of wild Sclavonians, who had been bathing in the Fulda, met him with an insulting outcry. Their interpreter asked him whither he was going. He answered quietly, "Further into the forest;" and here the hand of God watched over him, for the Sclavonians allowed him to proceed unmolested.

At last, he reached the object of his toilsome and dangerous pilgrimage, and found a place with which Boniface was perfectly satisfied.

Here, then, in the year 744, the foundation of the monastery of Fulda was laid, from which the cultivation of this wilderness commenced, and in which the most distinguished teachers of the German church in following ages were trained.

Charlemagne employed Sturm particularly in publishing the gospel among the wild Saxons, who, though often van-

quished, always rebelled against the rule of the Franks, and against the christian church, which had been forced upon them, and, therefore, rendered hateful.

Preachers of the gospel, coming in the train of an armed host, could not, indeed, find an easy entrance to the hearts of men. Sturm excited the fury of the pagans against him, and his institution was often the object of their desolating attacks.

On the day before his death he called all his people around him, and said to them, "You know what has been my earnest aim; how I have labored up to this day for your advantage and peace, and have been especially anxious that this monastery, after my death, might abide faithful to the will of Christ, and that you might here sincerely serve the Lord. Now abide all the days of your life in the course of conduct you have commenced. Pray for me to the Most High; and forgive me if I have done any thing wrong, or have injured any one by injustice. I forgive with all my heart all who have injured me, even my constant enemies."

On the following day, signs of approaching dissolution manifested themselves, and those of his friends about him, wished him to remember them at the throne of grace once more ere he entered that world where prayer would be lost in praise.

"Show yourselves worthy," said the dying man, "and let your conduct be such that I can with propriety pray for you."

"Prayer" is indeed "the christian's vital breath,
The christian's native air;
His watchword at the gates of death;
He enters heaven with prayer."

CHAPTER XXIII.

Otto, Apostle of Pomerania.

HIS CHRISTIAN DISINTERESTEDNESS; LABORS AMONG THE HEATHEN; SUCCESS IN CONVERTING THEM TO CHRISTIANITY; DEMOLISHES, BY HIS INFLUENCE, HEATHEN TEMPLES, AND RAISES CHURCHES IN THEIR PLACES.

AS THE close of the eleventh century was marked by a revival of christianity, so missionaries were again sent forth by the awakened church. We here delineate the character of one to whom the Pomeranians were indebted for christianity, and one who distinguished himself in his spiritual pastorate by fidelity and self-sacrificing love. He gladly subjected himself to deprivations, that he might be able to give more to the poor; to their benefit he most cheerfully devoted all the gifts that princes and nobles, far or near, sent him. Once during a fast, when fish were very dear, an expensive fish was brought to his table; he said to his steward, "God forbid that poor Otto should devour so much gold to-day. Take this expensive fish to my Saviour, who is dearer to me than I am to myself. Take it hence to some one whom you may find on a sick bed. For me who am in health, bread is enough." On another occasion a costly fur was sent to him, with a request that he wonld wear it as a memento of the giver. But he returned it, saying, "that since this gift was a proof of peculiar love, he was anxious, in remembrance of him who had shown him such love, that the gift should be preserved safe and uninjured, where neither moth nor rust can consume, nor thieves break through and steal;" referring to the Lord's saying respecting laying up treasures in heaven. He kept an exact register of all the sick persons in town, those suffering from various diseases, that he might send relief according to their particular necessities.

He now said to one of his servants, "Take this beautiful

and expensive fur cloak, and carry it to that lame and bed-ridden person, whose body is covered with sores."

It was quite befitting a man whose heart so glowed with love, that he should testify of the Saviour to those who had never before heard of him.

In the year 1124, Otto set out on his missionary travels. After many happy results, though not without several unsuccessful attempts, and overcoming some great dangers, he came to the capital city, Stettin. Much depended on the reception he might meet with here. Many of the pagans waited with intense expectation for the decision of their capital, and it seemed at first as if this would not be favorable. How commonly the lives of those who profess christianity do it the greatest injury! That which was here known of the neighboring christian nations, who were still very far from being truly christian, did not contribute to give a favorable idea of religion itself. The people were, as it seemed, in a state of happy childhood, and not yet acquainted with the evils through which man must pass in order to arrive at manhood.

They knew nothing of the evils that accompany a commencing civilization, the beginning of mental culture from which man can not remain exempt, who is not destined for an indolent life on earth in dull unconsciousness, but to exercise dominion over the world, as a being made in the image of God. As yet all the misery was unknown to them of the discord that man must experience in order to learn the corruption of his nature, and the only cure for it.

Thus the inhabitants of Stettin were disposed to over-value the advantages and prosperity of their situation, while they judged of the effects of christianity only according to the appearances presented to superficial observation, as shown in the mass of its professors.

Otto, whose patience was not to be wearied by the want of immediate success, spent several months at the capital, and during that time acted in a manner best suited to silence these complaints, by the example of his pious life, animated with the spirit of love.

If these pagans had heard of such vices prevailing among christians, which accompanied the transition from barbarism to civilization, and were still unknown to them by experience, Otto now showed them virtues which were equally strange to them, on the stand-point of their instinctive well-disposed state of nature—specimens of that self-sacrificing love which are only to be met with where the selfishness of man has been overcome by the spirit of God. He redeemed, at his own expense, many captives, and after furnishing them with clothes and provisions, sent them back to their friends.

But one occurrence, in particular, operated advantageously, by which the loving heart of Otto became more generally known, and the hearts of the young were attracted toward him. The wife of an opulent and respectable person in the town was a secret christian, who, in her youth, had been taken away by force from a christian country. She had always remained firmly attached to her faith, but had not ventured to profess it publicly among a heathen people.

She was greatly rejoiced at the coming of a bishop, but never ventured to give a public expression to her feelings, and become one of his adherents.

It might, perhaps, be owing in part to her influence, that her two sons frequently visited him for the purpose of asking questions respecting the christian faith. Otto availed himself of this to instruct them gradually in the truth of revelation, till at last, they declared themselves convinced, and desirous of baptism.

Their mother heard the circumstance with joy, and sent for them all to come to her. Otto waited for her in the open air, sitting on the turf, surrounded by his clergy, and the youths sitting at his feet. The sight of them made such an impression on the mother, who for so many years had concealed her christianity, that, overpowered by her feelings, she fell weeping on the ground.

The bishop and ecclesiastics were startled, and hastened to raise the woman; they tried to calm her mind, for they imagined that it was the distress occasioned by the apostacy of her sons from the religion of their fathers, which had

made so violent an impression upon her. But their views were quite changed as soon as the woman came to herself, and could find words to express her feelings. Her first words were, "I bless thee, Lord Jesus Christ, thou source of all hope and consolation, that I behold my sons consecrated in thy sacrament, and enlightened in thy Divine truth;" then embracing and kissing her sons, she added, "For thou knowest, my Saviour, that I have never ceased, in the secret recesses of my heart, for many years past, to commend them to thy mercy, and have besought Thee to do that for them, which Thou hast done for me."

And upon this she turned to the bishop and said, "Blessed be your coming to this town, for if you only stay here you will gain a large church for the Lord; only be not wearied out by long waiting. Behold! I myself, who stand before you, confess, by the assistance of Almighty God, and encouraged by your presence, venerable father, trusting also in the help of my children, that I am a christian, which I have not hitherto ventured to express openly."

She then told her whole history. The bishop, deeply affected, thanked God for the wonderful methods of his grace, assured the woman of his cordial sympathy, spoke many encouraging words to support her faith, and confirm her hope.

The destruction of all the monuments of idolatry were resolved upon, and when the resolution had been carried into effect, there were many valuable things which they wished to give Otto, but he would accept none of them, saying, "Far be it from us to enrich ourselves at your expense." But he was by no means inclined to consign every thing to destruction which had formerly been used for idolatrous purposes. He well understood how to distinguish what is pure in itself from the abuse of it by the vain imaginations of men. He allowed the people to divide among themselves all that was obtained from the demolition of the temples, after their destruction.

From Stettin, Otto's labors extended to other parts of the country; yet the foundation of the christian church was not

laid by him in such a manner as defied all attempts to destroy it. Many things checked his influence on the minds of the people; he could only address them through an interpreter; there were also external political considerations, which influenced the conversion of a part of the people. On account of business connected with his office, he was recalled to his diocese too early, before he was able to carry on the work further, and to establish it more firmly.

The infection of one-half of the country which still adhered to paganism, could easily retract on those who were still weak in faith, in the other half where christian churches had been founded. Under the deprivations to which the strict discipline of the church had subjected them, they might long with regret for the enjoyment of pagan pleasures, and the example of their heathen neighbors would serve to stimulate their desires. Yet in many hearts Otto had deposited an imperishable seed, from which a counteraction might spring up against the revived power of paganism. We may often notice, in the history of missions, how a rapid and, to a superficial dreamer, a very promising spread of christianity has been succeeded by a rallying of the forces of heathenism, and the final victory is not achieved till after a fresh conflict, which serves to separate the genuine and the spurious.

Otto would gladly have come earlier to the aid of the oppressed new church; but he was hindered for three years by a variety of unfortunate events and of official business, from following the impulse of his heart, and could not fulfill his wishes till the spring of the year 1128. As he traveled by a different route from that of his first visit, he came first to the town of Demmin, where he found an old acquaintance in the governor. Here he also met with the duke Wartislau, of Pomerania, whose heart he had won on his first missionary journey. He had just returned from a war with the neighboring Sclavonian tribes, in triumph, and laden with spoils. Here a spectacle was presented which must have deeply moved the heart of the benevolent missionary.

The duke's army had taken a number of prisoners who were to be divided with the rest of the booty. Among them

were several of very weak, tender constitutions; husbands were threatened to be separated by lot from their wives,—wives from their husbands, and parents from their children.

First of all, Otto succeeded with the duke, that the weakest should be set at liberty, and that relatives should not be separated from each other. But this did not satisfy him: he paid the ransom out of his own purse for many who were still pagans, and instructed them in christianity.

Whitsuntide was chosen for the purpose of holding a diet, on which the consent of the different orders in the state was to be solicited, that churches might be founded in all parts of the country. The town of Usedom, in which the seeds of christianity had been sown by some priests who had been left there by Otto on his first missionary tour, was selected to be the place for holding the diet. Of those who assembled on this occasion some had always remained pagans, others had been converted before by the efforts of the missionary, but, in his absence, had relapsed into heathenism. The duke introduced the bishop to the assembly, who were struck with awe at his whole demeanor. He urged upon them the appearance of this individual among them, took away the ground of excuse they formerly made for rejecting christianity,—that the publishers of this religion were poor, despicable people, in whom no confidence could be placed, and who only made use of it to get a living. Here they saw one of the first members of the German empire, who, at home, had an abundance of every thing, possessed much gold, silver and many jewels; a person, therefore, on whom no suspicion could be thrown that he sought any thing for himself; so far from that he had left a life full of honor and comfort, and had made use of his own property, in order to communicate to them that which he esteemed of the highest value. These words paved the way to their hearts for the bishop's address.

The festival of Whitsuntide gave him an opportunity of speaking of the grace and goodness of God, of the forgiveness of sins, of spiritual gifts. His words made a deep impression; the lapsed testified their penitence, and allowed themselves to be re-admitted into the church by the bishop;

those who had always been heathens were instructed in christianity and baptized. By a decree of the diet, the free publication of the gospel in all places was permitted.

When Otto was occupied in his mission at Gutzkow, the people requested that he would spare a beautiful new temple which was considered to be a great ornament of the town; but, different from his conduct on another occasion, he refused to do it. In vain great presents were offered to gain his consent. At last, they entreated that he would convert the temple into a christian church. But he believed that if he allowed this, a mixture of paganism and christianity was to be apprehended. In order to show the people that for their own best interests he could not comply with their wishes, he made use of the following illustration: "Would you, indeed," he said to them, "sow wheat over thorns and thistles? I trow not! As you, therefore, first of all, root out the thorns and thistles from your fields, in order that the seed you sow may bring forth an abundant crop, so must I take away from your midst all that belongs to idolatry, the thorns from my sermons, that your hearts may bring forth fruit unto everlasting life from the good seed of the gospel."

And, by daily reiterated representations, he at last conquered the opposition of the people, so that they destroyed with their own hands the temple and the idols. But, on the other hand, to indemnify the people for the loss of the temple, he zealously promoted the building of a magnificent church. And, as soon as the chancel and the altar were completed, without waiting for the final completion of the church, he prepared a splendid festival for its consecration, a true popular festival, which would eclipse in glory all their former pagan festivals. When all classes, high and low, were assembled for the occasion, and after all the ceremonies ordained by the church had been performed, he explained to the assembly the symbolic meaning of the ceremony, and made use of it to direct their attention from the outward to the inward, and to warn them against placing christianity in mere externals. He tried to make it evident to the people that what had been outwardly performed, related to the

internal state of the soul, which would become a temple of the Holy Spirit, if Christ dwelt in it by faith. He then turned to Mizlav, the noble who governed in this part of Pomerania, and who was baptized by him on the day the diet was held at Usedom. "You are," he said, "my beloved son, the true house of God. You must to-day, consecrate yourself to him, the Almighty Creator, in order to be freed from all other spirits which have taken possession of your heart, and to be his sole property and dwelling-place. Therefore, do not prevent the completion of this consecration, for it is of no use that this visible house of God is consecrated externally, unless that which is signified by this consecration takes effect in your inner man."

As the bishop believed that it might be inferred from Mizlav's expressions that he had been touched by the influences of the Holy Spirit, he added: "You have, in part, begun to be the house of God. Strive that you may become so altogether. Already you have forsaken the worship of idols for the gospel, and have received baptism. Now you must adorn the faith with the works of piety; you must renounce robbery, murder, oppression and deceit. It must become the rule of your life, what you do not wish other persons to do to you, that you must not do unto them. Set all your prisoners at liberty; and, if you do not give all their freedom, at least manumit those who are christians, who hold the same faith with yourself." By way of self-defence, Mizlav replied: "It is rather hard for me, O father, to give liberty to all, for some of them are deeply in debt to me." The bishop replied: "The word of the Lord tells us that we must forgive our debtors, in order that we may be forgiven. Thus you will obtain acquittal from the Lord, if you forgive your debtors in his name." Mizlav then said, with a deep sigh, "Behold, in the name of the Lord Jesus, I give all their freedom, that, according to your word, this consecration may be completed in me this day, with the forgiveness of all my sins." And, calling out to the servant to whom he had committed the oversight of the prisoners, he commanded him to set them all at liberty. Yet he made one exception, of which

no one knew any thing. He was the son of a very respectable man from Denmark. His father, who owed Mizlav a large sum of money, had left him behind as a pledge. He languished, heavily chained, in an underground prison. By a singular providence this also came to light. When the clergy were exerting themselves to prepare every thing that was requisite for the completion of the solemnity, one of the church vessels was missing. As an ecclesiastic was hurrying about in quest of it, he came near the prison, and the youth confined there succeeded in attracting his attention. He called to him, and entreated him to effect his release through the bishop. When he heard of it, he was moved with sympathy, but did not venture to ask this favor of one who had already granted him so much. He had recourse to earnest prayer, and, when he rose from his knees, he called his priests to him, and requested them to take Mizlav aside, and, with due moderation make known his request. It cost him a hard struggle to make the sacrifice, and to give up so large a sum of money. Yet, after conflicting with himself, he yielded. He went with tears to the bishop, and said to him: "Yes; for the sake of the Lord Jesus, if he require it, I will surrender my body and all I have in devout obedience." The example of this powerful noble roused all the rest to emulation, so that every one, according to his station, sought to evince the genuineness of his conversion by his works, and the sacrifices he made.

Otto himself would with joy have sacrificed his life for the love of Christ. He longed for the crown of martyrdom, and his zeal carried him beyond the bounds of moderation.

With anxious looks he regarded the island of Rugen, distant about one day's sail, and an earnest desire arose in his mind to go forth as a witness of the faith among the warlike inhabitants of this island, who were a tribe still zealously attached to paganism. But here death threatened him. The islanders vowed death to the enemy of their gods, should he venture to come to their shores. But imminent danger could not keep back the intrepid missionary. He would gladly meet death for the cause of Christ. The duke of Pomerania,

and all his friends, tried in vain to detain him; in vain they represented to him that his life might be preserved for greater usefulness. He called this little faith, saying that a man must seal the christian faith rather by works than by words. "How could the publishers of the gospel," he exclaimed, "expect the reward of eternal life, if they were afraid to give up the present? And, supposing that we were all obliged to die for Christ's sake, in publishing the gospel among the heathen, would not our testimony be so much the more glorious, since it would be sealed by our blood?" As endeavors were made to prevent, by every method, his departure to Rugen, he meditated some way of going unobserved, and it was, therefore, needful to watch his movements closely. Yet, while most persons censured Otto's glowing zeal as not sufficiently discreet, one of his priests, Ulrich, felt himself impelled to engage in a work for which he himself was ready to sacrifice his own life.

After receiving the bishop's blessing, he went on board, but had to combat incessantly with wind and rain. Three times he was obliged to give way to the fury of the elements, and as soon as the violence of the storm was somewhat abated, he would again make the attempt to pass over to the Isle of Rugen. Thus he spent seven days in conflict with the tempest and waves, and several times was in great danger. But as the weather continued unfavorable, and the vessel sprung a-leak, at last the bishop himself considered this a token of the Divine will against the undertaking, and recalled his beloved priest from the shore, while he thanked God that He had granted him such great faith and resolution.

The manner in which the bishop's project was freely discussed by his clergy, and in which he received their censure, shows the beautiful relation which here existed between the superior and his subordinates; the frankness of the clergy, the gentleness and humility of the bishop. At their common meal the clergy began, in the presence of their bishop, to joke about Ulrich's voyage. "Who," said they, "would have been guilty of murder if he had lost his life?" Another, who had been strongly opposed to the undertaking,

said, "Who could with greater justice be chargeable with the guilt of murder than he who moved him to rush into such danger?"

The bishop, not taking this amiss, endeavored to vindicate himself against the imputation. "When the Lord," he said, "sent his disciples as sheep among wolves, and they were torn in pieces by them, who was then guilty of their death? Was it the Lord?" This, indeed, was one of those applications of Christ's words, in which due regard was not paid to their original connection and design. Christ did not expose his disciples to certain death among the wolves, but enjoined on them to unite the wisdom of the serpent with the harmlessness of the dove, in order to lessen the danger that threatened them from the wolves. He did not order them to sacrifice their lives, without an object and advantage, but to preserve it in and for their calling, and only to resign it when fidelity to that calling required.

A correct understanding of the injunctions which Christ gave his apostles in reference to the duties of their calling, would rather have withheld the pious bishop from yielding to the impulse of such enthusiastic zeal.

There was another instance in which Otto justly ventured every thing in order to obtain a victory for the gospel; for here he might expect a happy result if he dreaded no danger, while trusting in the Lord. It was the continuation of the work he had begun, in which he was obliged to risk his life, relying on the protection of Him to whose service his life was consecrated. The prosperity of the church in Pomerania, depended entirely on determining whether paganism should retain the predominance, or christianity triumph in Stettin, the capital city. The power of paganism had revived there; those priests who had received baptism on Otto's first visit remained heathen at heart, and they had lost too much by the change of religion to be able easily to suppress their vexation. It was not difficult for them to find means to work upon the mass of the rude people. An epidemic that spread among both men and beasts, of which many died, was regarded by them as a sign of the wrath of the gods, and

they could easily induce the deluded multitude to believe this. Their influence succeeded so far that the people banded together to demolish a christian church. The most alarming representations were now circulated of the fury of the pagans in Stettin, and of the danger that threatened all who ventured to come forward in behalf of christianity. Otto was not alarmed, but his clergy had not equal strength of faith, and fear held them back.

Otto could not overcome their opposition by his remonstrances, and he resolved to act alone in the matter. After spending a day in solitude, he stole away in the evening, and he was not missed till they wished to call him to the early morning service. Seized with shame and anxiety for their spiritual father, they hastened after him, and obliged him to return; but the next morning they set out with him and sailed for Stettin.

It was not yet known how the seed scattered by this missionary, which seemed to have perished, remained and germinated in secret. A reaction of the christianity already deeply implanted in the minds of many, at last effected, under a combination of favorable circumstances, its victory over paganism. It appeared the Divine principle had gained an entrance among the better educated, higher class of persons. On them the heathen priests could not so easily operate, and among them reviving paganism could find no point of connection; only they did not venture to come forward against the clamor of the raging multitude.

In the popular uproar which had for its object the demolition of a church, it so happened that one of the persons who took an active part in it, while aiming a blow with a hammer, was suddenly seized as if with a fainting fit. His hand was paralyzed. He let the hammer drop, and fell himself from the ladder. He probably belonged to the number of apostate christians. The faith, which was not entirely expelled from his soul perhaps, again asserted its power; hence a mental conflict arose, terror seized him and palsied his hand when he attempted to join in destroying the temple dedicated to the God of the christians. Still paganism swayed his soul. He

could not renounce the worship of his ancient gods; but at the same time the God whose temple they wished to demolish, appeared to him as a being against whom no human power could avail, as it was proved, and hence he advised, in order to be on good terms with all the divinities, that near this church altars should be erected to the gods of the country. This was often a bridge which led from heathenism to christianity, when the pagans began first of all to acknowledge the God of the christians as a powerful deity, together with their ancient gods.

By all these favorable circumstances, preparation was made for Otto's renewed labors in Stettin, and he found here a zealous friend, who, by the experiences of his own life, had become a courageous professor of the gospel, viz.: Wittstock.

But Otto knew nothing of all these occurrences. He went to meet the threatening danger, not in dependence on human means and the coöperation of circumstances, but confiding in God alone and with resignation to his will, and regarding his life as of little value, compared with the holy cause which he served.

At first, he found a place of refuge with his associates in the church built before the city. But a band of armed men, led on by the priests, surrounded the church, and threatened death and destruction to those gathered there. Here it was shown, however, how the power of faith gives true presence of mind, and with it the requisite prudence in those decisive moments when every thing for the future depends on right action at the time. Had Otto been alarmed and showed signs of fear, his furious adversaries would have proceeded further in their attempts; but by his calm confidence and courage their rage was overpowered.

He continued to labor for a time, and persecution still continued, but still he wavered not. He was far from shrinking from martyrdom, and he would willingly have extended his labors to the Isle of Rugen, if he had not been called back by the concerns of his own diocese in 1128. His work was not yet done, and he went on faithfully to perform it, till his heavenly Master called him home to Himself in glory.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Raimund Lull.

HIS BIRTH-PLACE; CHARACTER OF HIS EARLY LIFE; PECULIAR MENTAL CONSTITUTION INFLUENCES HIS RELIGIOUS LIFE; LABORS IN VARIOUS PLACES; FINALLY STONED TO DEATH.

THIS extraordinary man was awakened to the higher life in a very peculiar manner. He was possessed of noble qualities, and high mental endowments, such as seldom meet in one person, and all was adorned with a glow of holy love.

We see in his example how much greatness may be dormant in a human being till, by a ray of light from on high beaming upon him, it is brought into conscious activity.

Various talents are required for missionary labor which must be animated by the Holy Spirit; nor can every man do every thing under all circumstances. Indeed, the greatest effect proceeds from the power of the simple gospel, from the demonstration of the Spirit and of power which accompanies these fundamental truths in the hearts of men.

But among nations possessing scientific culture, where their culture has hitherto been in the service of a religious stand-point to christianity, the example of a Paul is a witness to this, and many examples in the first ages of the church also witness to it. And in such a connection this man of great mental power, Raimund Lull, is to be mentioned, who in all his deep thinking kept this especially in view, how he might find means to bring reason entirely into the obedience of the faith.

He was born in the Island of Majorca, in the year 1236. Till his thirtieth year, he led a life estranged from all higher aspirations, in the court of the king of the Balearic Islands. And after his marriage, he continued to indulge in pleasure with a violation of matrimonial fidelity.

His poetry was devoted to sensual love. In his work on

Divine contemplation, he mourns over the loss of the first part of his life. "When we see, O God, the trees first of all bring forth leaves and twigs, and then blossoms, and after the blossoms fruit, it intimates that we should first of all give the signs of a good life; then our good works must be seen, as we see the blossoms follow the leaves; and then the advantages which our good works bring must show themselves, as fruits proceed from the blossoms. If trees are beautiful and good because they bring forth twigs, leaves, blossoms and fruit, how much better and more beautiful are men when they perform works of love, and glorify their Creator,—God.

"Trees and plants follow the law of their destiny in what they do, when step by step they bring forth twigs, leaves, flowers and fruit; but it is not so with us, for we do the contrary; as we see every day that we do that in youth which we ought to do in old age; and do that in old age which we ought to do in youth.

"I see, O Lord, that the trees every year bring forth flowers and fruits by which men are refreshed and nourished; but it is not so with me a sinner. For thirty years I have borne no fruit in the world; yea, rather I have injured my neighbors and friends. If, therefore, the tree which is destitute of reason brings forth more fruit than I have done, I must be deeply ashamed, and acknowledge my great guilt. To thee, my God, I return many thanks, because I perceive a great difference between the works I used to perform in my youth, and those I now do in my declining age. For as then all my works were done in sin and in fellowship with sin, so now, I hope, by thy grace, my works, contemplations, and wishes, relate to glorifying thee." But the feelings of christian piety which, as they moved his age and people, were communicated to him by education, had still not lost all their influence over him, though mingled with predominant sensuality.

We here see, as in many other instances, the great blessing of pious influences on the development of childhood, which, in a life carried away by sensual desires and passions, may revive again at last. So it was with Lull. From these

influences the opposition proceeded against that which had hitherto animated his life. When one night he sat on his bed and wished to make an amatory poem, the image of the crucified Saviour was presented to his eyes, and made so powerful an impression upon him that he could think no more of his love song. He wished not to give it up; he began again, but that image came before him again still more vividly, and at last he was obliged to desist from his intended composition. Day and night that image floated before him, and he could not shake off the impression. We must, indeed, acknowledge, when we consider the manifold dealings of Divine grace with the souls of men, whom Divine love follows in order to redeem, that although the power of the Divine over the heart is always the same, yet the manner in which the impression of it is rendered conscious depends on the peculiarity of the mental constitution and the temperament; and thus conversion is effected either more gradually, or at once by a great revolution. In the case of Lull, the man of poetic spirit, in whom imagination predominated, in whom the power of the Divine came forth in opposition to the earlier ruling power of sensual passion, the Divine power of the impression which the image of Christ made on his heart was represented in the form of a vision. He received it as an admonition that he should withdraw himself from the world, and devote himself entirely to the service of Christ. But now the question arose in his mind—"How shall I turn away from my hitherto impure life to so holy a calling?" This thought gave him no rest at night. Then he said to himself, "Christ is so gentle, patient and merciful; he calls all sinners to him, and will not reject me, notwithstanding my sins." Thus he became certain that it was God's will that he should forsake the world, and devote himself with his whole heart to the service of Christ.

Having resolved to dedicate himself wholly to the Lord, he proceeded to consider in what way this resolution might be best carried out, and he came to the firm conviction that he could engage in no employment more pleasing to the Saviour than devoting his life to the publication of the gospel.

His attention was directed particularly to the Saracens, whom it had been in vain attempted to subdue entirely in the Crusades by the power of the sword. But now the doubt forcibly struck him, how could he, an uninstructed layman, be fit for such a work? While he was filled with deep sorrow on this account, the thought occurred to him to write a book which might serve to prove the truth in opposition to all the errors of unbelievers. He believed that he could here recognize a Divine call, to prove the agreement between the truth of revealed religion and that which is founded in the nature of the human mind. The heavenly power of love, by which he was now seized, gave a new impulse to his thinking. Yet again he asked himself, supposing he should succeed in writing such a book, what good would this do the Saracens, who only understood the Arabic language. And thus the plan arose in his mind to apply to the pope and the christian princes that they would found institutions in the convents for learning the Arabic and the other languages which prevailed among nations that were not christian. The study of languages ought to serve the work of Divine grace, and he thought if institutions could be founded in which instruction in the different tongues could be given, then missionaries could go forth into all parts.

On the day following he repaired to a neighboring church, and besought the Lord with many tears that he who had infused this thought into his mind might enable him to complete that work for the vindication of christianity; to bring about the establishment of these missionary schools for languages; and, lastly, to devote his life to the Lord's cause. This happened at the beginning of the month of July; but the higher life in his soul had still to go through many fluctuations before it could reach a confirmed state.

Old habits were still too powerful in him, and so it came to pass that for three months he proceeded no further in realizing these plans, which had interested him so deeply.

Then came the fourth of October, the feast of St. Francis, and he heard a bishop preach in the church of the Franciscans, at Majorca, on the renunciation of the world. This

discourse was the means of reviving afresh what had been lying dormant in his soul. He immediately sold his possessions, surrendered himself to Christ, and left his home with the intention of never returning again. He first visited several churches, in which he called upon God for his blessing in the execution of those plans which had so forcibly occupied his thoughts.

He then wished to visit Paris, in order, by pursuing his studies at the university, to acquire the knowledge which was requisite for the accomplishment of his plans. But he was withheld from effecting this intention through the influence of his relations and friends. He remained, therefore, in Majorca, and began his studies there, being instructed in Arabic by a Saracen. The highest point of interest in his researches was the vindication of the truths of religion. If he succeeded, he thought, in refuting the objections of learned Mahommedans against christianity, and they could not refute the arguments for the truth which he brought forward, they must, of course, be converted to christianity; but, in this expectation he trusted too much to the power of his arguments. The promotion of missions was a main object with him, and to this the learning of languages would contribute. He obtained from James, king of Majorca and Minorca, that on the former of these islands a convent should be founded, on the express condition that thirteen Franciscans in it should always be instructed in the Arabic language, in order to labor as missionaries among the Saracens. In the year 1286, he visited Rome in order to gain the sanction of Pope Honorius IV., that in all countries such missionary schools should be attached to the convents; but he found the pope no longer living, and the papal chair vacant.

And when he visited Rome the second time for the same purpose, he was equally unsuccessful.

How great his desire was that schools for language in aid of missions should be established appears from those words in which he laments that, with all the pious zeal that existed, so little was done for the conversion of unbelievers. "I daily see," said he, in his work on the contemplation of God,

"pious monks, Franciscans, Dominicans, and others, daily fatiguing themselves with our defects and sins, while they endeavor, by their sermons, day and night, to draw us away from sin, to excite to goodness, and to establish love amongst us. I see monks taking up their abode in lonely, wild districts, in order not to be tempted by the sins which prevail among us; I see them plow and cultivate the land, in order to maintain themselves and the poor; and I see them rise in the middle of the night, to sing thy praises, O Lord!

We see hermits fleeing from the vanities of this world, withdrawn to mountains and uninhabited places, live on herbs, renounce worldly pleasures, and spend their whole life in loving and praising thee, O Lord, and in meditation on thy goodness and holiness.

I see monks and nuns forsake the world, that they may be partakers of glory in another; and, although they endure in their bodies much pain and toil, yet they escape much anxiety and distress which we people of the world suffer in our souls, because we are in the world and love the world. But I look round carefully, and, as far as I have examined, I find scarcely any one who, out of love to thee, O Lord, is ready to suffer martyrdom, as thou hast suffered for us. It appears to me agreeable to reason, if an ordinance to that effect could be obtained, that the monks should learn various languages, that they might be able to go out and surrender their lives in love to thee. Since, in our day, we see many of holy lives, and great wisdom, I pray thee, O Lord, that I may also see in my day that they form institutions in order to learn various languages, and be able to preach to unbelievers. Lord of glory, if that blessed day should ever be in which I might see thy servants so influenced by zeal to glorify thee, as to go into foreign lands in order to testify of thy Holy Trinity, of thy blessed incarnation, and of thy bitter sufferings, that would be a glorious day, a day on which that glow of devotion would return with which the holy apostles met death for their Lord."

As Lull was not able to form, as he wished, any association for this holy undertaking, he felt himself impelled to go all

alone among unbelievers, and, in the year 1281, he went to Genoa, in order to sail from that place to North Africa. As already so much had been heard of the remarkable change that had passed over him, of his ardent zeal for the conversion of those who knew not God, his undertaking awakened great expectations. But he had still many a hard conflict to sustain; the natural man still exerted its power over him. That imagination which was filled with transporting images by the holy cause that inspired him, in which the glory of his inner life was reflected, could also be stirred up by the impulses of the natural man, and receive into itself images of another kind; the fear of the natural man could be reflected in it.

It could operate in a variety of ways, according as it stood in the service of a higher or lower power. Already the vessel in which he was to embark was ready for sailing; his books were put on board, when his fervent imaginative faculty depicted to him the fate which he might experience among the Mohammedans in so vivid and terrific a manner that he could not summon courage to go on board. Yet, when the vessel had sailed, the reproaches of his conscience took possession of him for being unfaithful to the holy resolutions God had incited him to make, and for having given such offense to believers in Genoa. A severe illness was the consequence of this mental conflict. While he had to suffer so much in mind and body, it happened that he heard a ship had entered the port, which was on the point of sailing to Tunis. Although he seemed more dead than alive, he allowed himself to be carried on board, with his books. As his friends considered it impossible that, in such a state, he could bear the voyage, they brought him back, full of concern.

Yet, with all the care taken of his body, his state of health showed no symptoms of improvement; for the root of the evil lay in his soul. When, some time after, he heard of a second ship bound for Tunis, nothing could keep him back from being taken into it. And, when the ship had set sail, he felt relieved from the burden that oppressed his conscience, for he found himself in his element; he had entered on the

fulfillment of his calling, which he felt confident was a Divine one. With the health of the soul, that of the body returned. In a few days, to the astonishment of all his fellow-passengers, he felt as well as he had ever been in his life.

When he arrived in Tunis, at the end of the year 1291, or the beginning of the year 1292, he assembled the Mohammedan doctors, and explained to them that he was come in order to institute a comparison between christianity and their doctrine. If he found the arguments stronger in support of the latter, he would become a convert to it.

The doctors assembled in great numbers, but during the disputation, one of them, who was filled with extreme fanaticism, pointed out to the king the dangers that would arise to their own faith from the proselyting zeal of Lull, and proposed that he should be put to death. He was cast into prison, and would have been condemned to death, but one of the Saracenic doctors, more unprejudiced and wiser than the rest, interceded for him. He commended his spirit, and said, that as the zeal of a Mohammedan, who should go among christians to convert them to the true faith, would be deemed praiseworthy, so they could not hesitate to honor in a christian such zeal for the propagation of that religion which appeared to him the true one. These representations succeeded so far that the life of the missionary was spared, and he was only ordered to leave the country. When released from prison, he met with much ill-treatment from the fanatical people. He was conveyed to the Genoese vessel in which he had come, and which was soon to sail, and informed at the same time that if he showed himself again in the territory of Tunis, he would be stoned. But since he hoped by continued exertions to convert many of the Saracenic doctors with whom he had disputed, and his anxiety for the welfare of their souls was so great, he could not make up his mind to let that hope be frustrated. Gladly would he have sacrificed his life for such an object.

He allowed that vessel to sail without him, went on board another, and sought for an opportunity to steal from it unobserved into Tunis. In September, 1292, while he was thus

lying in the Bay of Tunis, he had sufficient composure of mind to engage in preparing a philosophical work. After waiting here for three weeks in vain, he at last sailed in the vessel, and went to Naples. Here he spent several years, and gave lectures on his peculiar system of philosophy, till the call of a pious hermit, Peter of Myrrhone, who had been made pope by the name of Celestine V., gave him hopes that he might at last engage in the work which he had so long wished, for the promotion of missionary undertakings. But Celestine's government was too brief, and his successor, Boniface VIII., felt too little interest in religious concerns.

During his residence at Rome in the year 1296, he composed a work which was closely related to his missionary projects, in which he aimed at demonstrating incontrovertibly the fundamental truths of the christian religion. Although he thought too highly of his proofs, yet this was owing to the strength of his own faith.

We must highly esteem the confidence of the conviction that there could be no division in the human mind; that the truth which to him was supreme, and corresponded to all the wants of his spirit, must stand in harmony with the reason and disposition of man. We can but reverence the man, whose exertions were sustained by the incentive that christianity was destined to conquer the opposition of all minds, and become the religion of all nations.

Being unable to attain his object in Rome, he labored for a succession of years, wherever an opening presented itself; he endeavored to convince by argument the Saracens and Jews in the Island of Majorca; he visited Cyprus, and proceeded thence to Armenia, where he labored to bring back to the orthodox faith the various sects of the Oriental church. All this he undertook with only one associate, without being able to gain the assistance of the powerful and opulent. At intervals, he delivered lectures on his philosophical system, in the universities of France and Italy, and composed various works.

During the years 1306 and 7, he traveled again in North Africa, and visited the town of Buggia, at that time the

capital of a Mohammedan kingdom. He came forward publicly, and declared in the Arabic language, that christianity was the only true religion, and that Mohammed's doctrine was false.

He wished to convince every one of this. A great crowd assembled around him, and he delivered to them hortatory addresses. Many raised their hands to stone him, when a mufti who heard it, hurried him away from the multitude, and called him into his presence. He asked him how he could act so madly as to appear publicly against their doctrine, and whether he did not know that according to the laws of the land his conduct was punishable with death.

To this Lull calmly replied: "A genuine servant of Christ, who has experienced in himself the truth of his faith, feels no dread of death, if he can secure his soul's salvation."

Upon this they entered into a disputation on the relation of the two religions to one another, and Lull testified boldly of his faith. It was at last settled, at his proposal, that a book should be written on both sides in defense of their respective religions, and it would then appear which had gained the victory by the arguments brought forward. Lull composed such a work, and sent it to the mufti in order that he and other learned Mohammedans might examine the book and answer it. But after a few days, an order was issued to banish him from the country, and at the same time the Saracens put him on board a vessel that was sailing for Genoa. The vessel was shipwrecked not far from Pisa; some of the passengers were drowned; but Lull escaped with the loss of his books and all his property.

On the 14th of August, 1314, he again crossed over to Africa. He went to Buggia, and labored here first of all in secret, in the small circle of those persons whom he had won over to christianity during his last sojourn.

He endeavored to strengthen their faith, and to advance them further in christian knowledge. Thus he might have continued to labor, for a long time unnoticed, but he could not repress the desire for martyrdom. He appeared in public, and declared that he was the same person who had formerly

been banished from the country. He exhorted the people with threatenings of the Divine punishment if they refused to renounce Mohammedanism.

He was attacked by the Saracens with extreme fury, and after being severely handled, was dragged out of the city, and stoned by the king's command. According to one account, some merchants from Majorca, obtained permission to search for the corpse of their countryman in the heap of stones under which he was buried, and brought it back to the island; according to another account they found some remains of life in him, and succeeded in rekindling for awhile the sparks of life; but he died on ship-board, within sight of his native country, on the 30th of June, 1315.

CHAPTER XXV.

Lindger and Willehad.

THEIR PREPARATION FOR THE MINISTERIAL WORK; OPPOSITION AND SUFFERING IN IT; CLOSING SCENE OF THEIR LIVES.

THESE two men, in their ministry, knew how to present the model of genuine missionaries.

Lindger was by birth a Frieslander, and the seeds of christianity were early sown in his heart. His grandfather was a distinguished man of that people, named Ado Wursing. He belonged, as a pagan, to that class of persons of whom the apostle Paul says, that they who have not the law, and yet by nature do the works of the law, are a law unto themselves; those who, if they have received no other revelation, yet hear the voice of God in their consciences. He took care of the poor and oppressed, and was an upright judge.

But, by his zeal against all injustice, he drew on himself the enmity of Radbod, the pagan king of the Frieslanders, and was obliged to take refuge in the adjacent kingdom of

the Franks. He afterward became a zealous christian, and assisted Willebrord in his labors among his countrymen. Lindger was a grandson of this pious man. When a child he gave signs of his future destination. As soon as he began to read and walk, he collected pieces of leather and the bark of trees, and made them into little books. When he found any dark juice, he tried to write with it, as he had seen older persons do.

And when he was asked what he had done in the day, he answered that he had been writing or reading. And, when further asked, "Who taught you that?" he replied, "God has taught me."

He showed early a great thirst for knowledge, and entreated his parents to intrust him for education to some pious man. They placed him under the care of the abbot, Gregory. His desire of knowledge led him afterward to resort to the renowned teacher of his age, Alcuin, at York. Enriched with acquirements and books, he returned to his native country, where he was welcomed by his former teacher, Gregory. After his death he labored, amidst manifold dangers and difficulties, for the conversion of the Frieslanders and Saxons. He founded, first of all, a christian church on the island dedicated to Fosite, one of the pagan divinities, which hence received the name of Heligoland. After the overthrow of the Saxons, the district of Munster became the settled scene of his ministry, and he was consecrated bishop of that place. His missionary zeal impelled him to seek a new sphere of labor, attended with greater danger. He wished to visit the wild Normans, who had struck the christian nations with great terror, and among whom he could reckon on no support; but the emperor, Charles, would not allow him to leave his diocese.

Even in the illness which befell him not long before his death, in the year 809, he struggled with his bodily weakness, in order not to interrupt the discharge of his spiritual duties. On the Sunday preceding the night of his death, he preached twice, to two different congregations; in the morning in the church at Coesfield, in the afternoon, about three o'clock, in

the church at Billerbeck, where he expended the remnant of his strength in performing what seemed to him his christian duty. He expired, with his scholars assembled around his bed, on the night of the 26th of March.

Willehad, from Northumberland, is the one we have associated with him. By the report of what other missionaries had effected among the Frieslanders and Saxons, he was impelled to follow their example. He labored first of all in the district where Boniface had met with martyrdom. Many persons were baptized by him ; many of the better class intrusted their children to him for education. But when he betook himself to the province now called Groningen, where idolatry still predominated, the fury of the pagan population was so excited by his exertions that they sought to murder him. But by the advice of one of the more moderate among them, they agreed first to inquire of their gods, by casting lots. And, since even superstition must serve the will of God, Providence so ordered it that the lot was in favor of his preservation, and he was able to leave unharmed.

He now proceeded to the district of Drenthe. His discourses here had begun to meet with much acceptance, when some of his scholars suffered themselves to be led away by intemperate zeal, and hastened to destroy the idolatrous temples, instead of first banishing, by the power of Christ, the idols from the hearts of their worshipers. This roused the wrath of the pagans. They rushed upon the missionaries, and Willehad was loaded with blows. One of the infuriated mob aimed a stroke at him with a sword, intending to kill him, but the stroke only cut a thong by which a box was suspended about his neck, and he escaped.

The prevalent notions of the times led persons to see in this incident, not the universal providence of that Being who numbers the hairs of our heads, and without whom a sparrow does not fall to the ground, and who can make use of every means for his holy purposes as he pleases, but rather a proof of the protective power of relics which he had about him. Even the pagans were induced by it to abstain from their attacks on Willehad, whom they believed protected by a higher power.

When the emperor Charles heard of the missionary's undaunted zeal for the propagation of the gospel, he sent for him, and assigned him his post in the district which afterward formed the diocese of Bremen. He was at first to labor as a priest among the Frieslanders and Saxons, and to perform every part of the pastoral office till a bishopric could be founded. After a while, his successful ministry was interrupted by a fresh revolt of the heathen population.

He believed that it was his duty to follow his Lord's command, and not needlessly to risk his life. In order to preserve his life for preaching the gospel still longer, he availed himself of the opportunity offered to him for flight.

He afterward found a quiet place of refuge in a convent founded by Willebrord, at Eptemach, which also became a rendezvous for his scholars, who had been dispersed by persecutions and wars. He spent two years at this place, occupied with teaching, reading the Scriptures, and the multiplication of transcripts of them.

At last, after peace had been restored among the conquered Saxons, the bishopric intended by the emperor Charles was founded at Bremen, and Willehad was installed in it. While on one of his visitation journeys, which he was obliged to take frequently on account of the peculiar character of his new diocese, he fell ill of a violent fever, in the year 789, at Blexem-on-the-Weser, not far from the Wegesak, so that there were apprehensions of his speedy death. His scholars stood weeping round his bed. One of them, who was on very intimate terms with the bishop, broke silence, and with tears expressed the pain they would feel if their spiritual father were taken from them, and their anxiety for the bereaved congregations, which were scarcely won over to christianity. "Oh! venerable father," he said, "do not leave those so soon whom you have but lately gained for the Lord. Leave not the congregations and the clergy destitute, who by your zeal have been brought together, that the weak flocks may not be given up to the attacks of the wolves. Do not withdraw your presence from us, your poor scholars, that we may not wander about, like sheep without a shepherd."

Willehad replied, with deep emotion, "Oh! do not wish, my son, that I should be any longer detained from the presence of my Lord. Do not force me to remain any longer in this wearisome earthly life. I do not desire to live here any longer, and I am not afraid to die. I will only beseech my God, whom I have always loved with my whole heart, whom I have always served with my whole soul, that he would grant me such a reward of my labor as it may please him. But the sheep which he committed to my care, I trust in him to preserve them; for, if I have been able to do any good, I have accomplished it by his power. The grace of him, with whose mercy the whole earth is full, will not be wanting for you."

Thus does the pious soul confidently trust in the promises of God, when the receding things of time are dim to his vision, and the brighter realities of a coming world beam in upon his mind.

It is then earthly instrumentalities assume their appropriate insignificance, things of time and sense appear in their true light, and God alone worthy of supreme exaltation.

Then, like Willehad, the christian feels, "If I have done any good, it is through the power of Christ."

CHAPTER XXVI.

Early days of Martyrdom.

CHARACTER OF THE DIFFERENT PERSECUTIONS; THEIR CAUSE AND EFFECTS; TRUTH OF HEAVENLY ORIGIN, AND DESTINED TO STAND.

IT HAS often been said, that "*the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.*" When some young monks who had been converted, were put to death in 1523, in the Low Countries, Luther composed a hymn commemorative of these first martyrs of the Reformation, who thus laid down their lives for the gospel.

It at once became immensely popular, and was every where to be heard in the towns and villages, sung with the deepest enthusiasm by the people.

We give an extract from it, as it so well illustrates the sentiment above quoted:

"Flung to the heedless winds,
Or on the waters cast,
Their ashes shall be watched,
And gathered at the last.
And from that scattered dust,
Around us and abroad,
Shall spring a plenteous seed,
Of witnesses for God.

Jesus hath now received,
Their latest living breath,
Yet vain is Satan's boast,
Of victory in their death.
Still, still, though dead, they speak,
And trumpet-tongued, proclaim,
To many a wakened land,
The One availing name."

It indeed seems that the malicious designs of wicked men were defeated by the very ends which they employed to further them. Proud emperors intent upon banishing even the very name of *christian* from their realms, devised every possible method,—used every imaginable threat, to smother, and root out the holy principle of godliness in the hearts of their subjects.

When they saw the bold and fearless soldiers of Jesus Christ triumphing over every foe, and rejoicing, notwithstanding their menaces, the only alternative that was given them was recantation of a cruel death. Animated with the glorious prospect that awaited them in the future,— cheered by the hope of a blessed immortality beyond the grave; and more than all, influenced by a solemn sense of obligation to Him who had died for their salvation, they cheerfully preferred the latter to the base denial involved in the former.

Others, beholding the fortitude and patient endurance of those who suffered, were constrained to acknowledge that nothing short of a Divine power, could sustain the soul under

such accumulated weights of sorrow as some were compelled to bear.

Many were thus led to admire the principle, and from that to embrace it, till finally persecution seemed destined to increase the number of the godly, instead of diminishing them.

So true is it that the kingdom of Christ will stand firm against the assaults of the adversary.

The emissaries of Satan were faithful in effort to retard the progress of the church, and we who live under the peaceful shadow of the gospel in these days of comparative illumination, can scarcely form a faint idea of the suffering—the inconceivable tortures, which those endured in the early ages of christianity, who had the boldness to profess themselves followers of the ascended Jesus.

With our freedom of speech and liberty of conscience, we can hardly appreciate the feelings of those who expected to be apprehended for treason or heresy, if they dared to signify either by word or deed, their preference for the spiritual worship of the blessed Redeemer.

In contemplating the lives of the martyrs, we forbear to dwell upon those who suffered in the earliest persecutions, on account of the extreme cruelty—the revolting, inhuman treatment that every where meets our gaze. We can scarcely deem it possible that the most abandoned and wicked of men, could have the hardihood to inflict such cruel wrongs on their innocent victims as we find they did. That any can be so dead to all the feelings of humanity seems incredible.

The first ten great persecutions under the Roman emperors, were replete with scenes of cruelty, that strike the mind with horror. The first was commenced in the year 67, in the reign of Nero, emperor of Rome. For the space of five years, he reigned with tolerable credit to himself, but at the expiration of that time he gave way to the greatest extravagancies of temper, and the most atrocious barbarities. Among other things, he took it into his head to order that the city of Rome should be set on fire, which was accordingly done by his officers, guards and servants.

While the imperial city was in flames, he went up to the tower of Macenas, played upon his harp, sung the song of the burning of Troy, and openly declared, "That he wished the ruin of all things before his death."

The dreadful conflagration continued nine days; when Nero, finding that his conduct was greatly blamed, and severe odium cast upon him, determined to lay the whole upon the christians; at once to excuse himself, and have an opportunity to feast his sight with new cruelties.

This was the occasion of the first persecution; and the barbarities exercised upon the christians were such as even excited the commiseration of the Romans themselves.

Domitian, a person of naturally cruel disposition, succeeded Nero, and carried on the fearful work his predecessor had commenced. Thus for various pretended reasons ten different persecutions were raised, conducted by men who seemed to vie with each other in devising new methods of cruel punishment.

Many reasons have been assigned as the occasion of the last, particularly the great increase of the christians, whose numbers rendered them formidable; and the hatred of Galerius, the adopted son of Dioclesian, who being stimulated by his mother, a bigoted pagan, never ceased persuading the emperor to enter upon the persecution, till he had accomplished his purpose. The fatal day fixed upon to commence this bloody work was the 23d of February, 303, and on which, as the pagans boasted, they hoped to put a termination to christianity. Alas! vain man, to think of overturning the counsels of heaven, the decrees of the Almighty.

They were indeed suffered to do a dreadful work. The name of christian was so obnoxious to them, that all fell indiscriminately sacrifices to their opinions, without distinction of age or sex. This persecution lasted ten years, during which time an almost incredible number suffered martyrdom. We give one instance only, that of Romanus. He was a native of Palestine, deacon of the church of Cæsarea, at the time of the commencement of Dioclesian's persecution. Being at Antioch when the imperial order arrived for sacrificing to

idols, he was greatly afflicted to see many christians, through fear, submit to the idolatrous mandate, and deny their faith to preserve their lives. Reprehending some of the recreant christians for their conduct, he was informed against to the emperor, and soon after apprehended. Being brought to the tribunal, he boldly confessed himself a christian, and said he was ready to suffer any thing which he inflicted upon him on account of his faith.

Being condemned, he was scourged, his body put to the rack, going through a series of tortures we can not dwell upon. Thus cruelly mangled, he turned to the governor, and very calmly thanked him for what he had done, and for having opened him so many mouths to preach the doctrines of christianity; "for," said he, "every wound is a mouth, to sing the praises of the Almighty."

Surely, nothing but the fanatical zeal, the willful blindness of men, could have prevented his accusers from being impressed with the consciousness of the superiority of the religion of Jesus over every thing else on this occasion.

The following circumstance is said to have happened in connection with this scene of individual persecution:

Romanus offered to stand to the decision of a young child, if one would be chosen free from malice, and with a character adorned with the graces of virtue; and to put the truth of the christian upon that test. The proposal was accepted, and they agreed to put the merits of the cause upon that issue.

Accordingly, a child of about seven years of age was called out of the crowd, and, on being asked whether he thought it to be true, that men ought to worship but one God, in Christ, or to worship many gods? he answered, "that certainly, whatsoever men affirm to be God, must be but One, and as this one is Christ, He must of necessity be God; for that there are many gods," continued the boy, "we children can not believe." The governor, amazed at this, was highly enraged with the child, and calling him *traitor*, asked him who taught him the lesson? "My mother," replied the child, "early instructed me to believe in Christ."

This so incensed the man, that he ordered him to be severely whipped; insomuch that the beholders could not refrain from tears, the mother of the child only excepted, who chid him for asking for a draught of water to be given to him, charging him to thirst for that cup which the infants of Bethlehem had drank of, and bidding him remember Isaac, who willingly offered his neck for the sacrifice to his father's sword.

Whilst the woman was giving her son this lesson, the merciless executioner plucked the hair of his head, his mother at the same time saying to him, "Though you suffer here, my child, you shall shortly be with Him who shall adorn thy naked head with a crown of eternal glory."

Upon this the child smiled upon her and his executioners, and bore their stripes with heroic fortitude.

Soon after Romanus was ordered to be strangled, and the child to be beheaded, which sentence was executed on the 17th of November, 303.

How strikingly does this illustrate the power of God's grace, which not only supports the strong man, but makes a timid child a conqueror, and enables a loving mother freely to resign the child of her love to suffering and death for the honor of God.

Patriotic zeal and love of country, prompted mothers in the days of chivalry, to urge their sons to the field of battle, for the sake of fame and popular applause; but where, in all the pages of history, do we find any thing so sublime as this;—any thing that bears any comparison to the deeds of those men and women who not only gave up their own bodies to torture, but freely sacrificed those friends and those interests dearer than life, for the cause of truth and right?

Dioclesian's persecution was followed by that under Julian the Apostate, the Goths, Vandals, &c.

Then came that of the Waldenses in France, by Pope Innocent the Eighth, in 1488. He drove them from their quiet valley, and compelled them to take refuge in the dens and caves of the mountains, at the same time confiscating their property, and desolating their houses and lands. The persecution was finally stopped in the following manner:

The pope, by being often near them at his seat at Avignon, heard occasionally many things concerning their differing from the church of Rome. The intelligence greatly exasperated him, and he determined to have them persecuted on account of their religious tenets. Proceeding to some extremities, under the sanction of his ecclesiastical authority, without consulting the king of France, the latter became alarmed, and sent his master of requests and his confessor to examine into the affair. On their return, they reported that the Waldenses were not such dangerous or bad people as had been represented; that they lived with perfect honesty, were friendly to all, hurt none, kept the Lord's day sacred, feared God, honored the king, and wished well to the state. "Then," said the king, "they are much better christians than myself or my Catholic subjects, and therefore they shall not be persecuted." The king was as good as his word, and accordingly sent orders that they should remain undisturbed.

The Albigenses, people of the reformed religion, inhabiting the country of Albi, were soon after condemned on the score of their religion, by order of Pope Alexander the Third.

Notwithstanding this, they increased so rapidly, that many cities were inhabited by persons only of their persuasion, and several eminent noblemen embraced their doctrines.

The pope, at length, pretended that he wished to draw them to the Romish faith by sound argument and clear reasoning, and for this end ordered a general disputation, in which, however, the popish doctors were entirely overcome by the arguments of Arnold, a reformed clergyman, whose reasons were so strong, that they were compelled to confess their force.

This so excited the pope, that he resolved upon persecution; and in order to raise forces to act coercively against the Albigenses, he sent persons throughout all Europe, and promised paradise to all that would come to his aid in the *Holy War,* as he termed it, and bear arms for the space of forty days.

Great numbers resorted to him, ignorantly hoping to obtain the prize which mortal man could never give. They

commenced their work, and oh, infatuated mortals! to think of gaining heaven by such cruel deeds.

In the year 1620, the persecution against this people was very great. At a town called Tell, while the minister was preaching to a congregation of the reformed, the papists attacked and murdered many of the people. A lady of considerable eminence, being exhorted to change her religion, if not for her own sake, at least for the sake of the infant she held in her arms, with an undaunted courage she said, "I did not quit Italy, my native country, nor forsake the estate I had there, for the sake of Jesus Christ, to renounce Him here. With respect to my infant, why should I not deliver him up to death, since God delivered up His son to die for us?" As soon as she had done speaking, they took the child from her, gave it to a popish nurse to bring up, and put her to death.

This is only one instance of their numberless deeds of barbarity.

Our feelings incline us to turn from these sickening pictures altogether, but it may be well for us to consider them to some extent, that we may the better appreciate the peculiar privileges heaven confers upon us at the present day; as well as to become convinced of the singular efficacy of the gospel, which was never more apparent than in those times of persecution which "tried men's souls," but eventually obtained for christianity a most signal triumph.

After the Albigensian persecution, came the Inquisition with its train of new and untold horrors; but on this we forbear comment, as well as upon the cries which went up from the valleys of Piedmont, and at a later date from Scotland, Ireland, Germany, all of which entered the ears of the God of heaven, who will finally dispense judgment to all.

God had a purpose to accomplish in suffering His people to be thus tried, and it is not ours to question the wisdom of His plans. It certainly demonstrated to the world the all-sufficiency of His gospel in every human emergency. It showed the immutability of His purpose respecting His church and His religion. Human ingenuity ingeniously

sought its extermination, but the combined skill and energy of a vast multitude could not disturb its foundations. It was built on the "Rock of Ages," and earth itself arrayed against it, would have been as nothing.

A great company, indeed, went from the church militant to the courts of heaven, "through much tribulation," but they left behind them a glorious testimony for Christ, which spoke eloquently for the cause.

It exhibited in striking contrast, the great difference between the pure, peaceable religion of Christ, with its meek, forgiving spirit, and the selfish, cruel, mad theories, which man devised, and dignified with their own peculiar tenets, discovering their fallacy in the very absurdity of their formation.

From these days of darkness and persecution, there come bright and cheering rays of consolation to the troubled spirit. They proclaim with unerring certainty that "the counsels of God shall stand," and that the ark of God shall ride securely over all the threatening waves of time, and finally reach the peaceful harbor where storms shall never beat against it more.

All the efforts of men to retard and obscure truth will prove unavailing. It is true that for a time clouds and darkness may intercept its light, but it will beam forth with renewed brightness at the last. Truth is of heaven, and the same is pledged for its security.

While perusing these accounts of good men who suffered in defense of the truth, we may well ask ourselves, if we have kindred faith, for the same principle which animated them, must also be ours, would we be good soldiers under the banner of the cross, and continue in faithful allegiance to the Captain of our salvation, through all the trials, which await in a greater or less degree, every subject of the heavenly Monarch, in this vale of tears.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Polycarp.

SENTENCE OF DEATH PASSED AGAINST HIM; CONDUCT BEFORE THE PROCONSUL AND IN THE HOUR OF DEATH.

THE aged and venerable Polycarp, a disciple of the Apostle John, gave up his life in defense of the truth, in the year 167, having passed through the varied scenes of this mortal life for the space of ninety years.

When he heard the shouts of the people demanding his death, it was his intention, at first, to remain quietly in the city, and await the issue which God might ordain for him. But, by the entreaties of the church, he suffered himself to be persuaded to take refuge in a neighboring villa. Here he spent the time, with a few friends, occupied, day and night, in praying for all the churches throughout the world. When search was made for him, he retreated to another villa; and directly after appeared the servants of the police, to whom his place of refuge had been betrayed by unworthy men, who enjoyed his confidence. The bishop himself, indeed, was gone: but they found two slaves, one of whom was put to the torture, and betrayed the place whither Polycarp had fled for refuge. As they were approaching, he was in the highest story of the dwelling, and might have escaped to another house, by the flat roof peculiar to the Oriental style of building; but he said, "The will of the Lord be done."

Descending to the officers of justice, he ordered whatever they chose to eat and drink to be placed before them, requesting them to indulge him with one hour for quiet prayer. But the fullness of his heart hurried him through two hours, so that the pagans themselves were touched by his devotion. The time having come, they conveyed him to the city on an ass, where they were met by the chief officer of the police,

coming, with his father, from the town. He took up Polycarp into his chariot, and addressing him kindly, asked, "what harm there could be in saying 'the emperor, our Lord,' and in sacrificing." At first, Polycarp was silent; but as they went on to urge him, he said mildly, "I shall not do as you advise me." When they perceived they could not persuade him, they grew angry. With opprobrious language, they thrust him from the carriage, in such a violent manner as seriously to injure him. Without looking round he proceeded on his way, cheerful and composed as if nothing had happened.

Having arrived before the pro-consul, he was urged by the latter to have respect at least to his own old age, to swear by the genius of the emperor, and give proof of his penitence, by joining in the shout of the people, "Away with the godless." Polycarp looked with a firm eye at the assembled crowd, pointing to them with his finger; then with a sigh, and his eyes uplifted to heaven, he said, "Away with the godless!" But when the pro-consul urged him further, "Swear, curse Christ, and I release thee."

"Six and eighty years," the old man replied, "have I served him, and he has done me nothing but good; and how could I curse him, my Lord and Saviour?" The pro-consul still persisted to urge him. "Well," said Polycarp, "if you would know what I am, I tell you frankly, I am a christian. Would you know what the doctrine of christianity is, appoint an hour and hear me." The pro-consul, who showed here how far he was from sharing in the fanatic spirit of the people, how gladly he would have saved the old man, if he could have appeased the multitude, said, "Do but persuade the people." Polycarp replied, "To you I was bound to give account of myself, for our own religion teaches us to pay due honor to the powers ordained of God, so far as it can be done without prejudice to our salvation. But those I regard as not worthy of hearing me defend myself before them." The governor having once more threatened him in vain with the wild beasts and the stake, caused it to be proclaimed by the herald, in the circus, "Polycarp has declared himself to be a

christian!" With these words was pronounced the sentence of death. The heathen populace, with an infuriate shout, replied, "This is the teacher of atheism, the father of the christians, the enemy of our gods, by whom so many have been turned from the worship of the gods and from sacrifice."

The pro-consul, having yielded to the demands of the people, that Polycarp should die at the stake, Jews and pagans hastened together, to bring wood from the shops and the baths. As they were about to fasten him with nails to the stake of the pile, he said, "Leave me thus; He who has strengthened me to encounter the flames, will also enable me to stand firm at the stake." Before the fire was lighted, he prayed: "Lord, Almighty God, Father of thy beloved Son, Jesus Christ, through whom, we have received from thee the knowledge of thyself; God of angels, and of the whole creation; of the human race, and of the just that live in thy presence; I praise thee that thou hast judged me worthy of this day and hour, to take part in the number of thy witnesses, in the cup of thy Christ."

What appeared the greatest thing to the church at this time, was not the martyr's death of Polycarp in itself, but the christian manner in which it was suffered. They expressed it as their conviction, that all had been so ordered, that he might exhibit what was the essential character of evangelical martyrdom; "for," so they write, "he waited to be delivered up, not pressing forward uncalled; imitating, in this respect, our Lord, and leaving an example for us to follow; so that we should not look to that alone which may conduce to our own salvation, but also to that which may be serviceable to others.

"For this is the nature of true and genuine charity, to seek by all possible means the salvation of souls."

The death of this pious shepherd contributed also to the temporal advantage of his flock. The rage of fanaticism, after having obtained this victim, became somewhat cooled; and the pro-consul, who was no personal enemy of the christians, suspended all further search, and refused to know that another christian existed.

Polycarp was a *faithful witness* for Christ, and accomplished much, both in his life and in his death, for the furtherance of the holy cause.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

William Lithgow.

ACCOUNT OF HIS TRAVELS; TERRIBLE PERSECUTION IN SPAIN; EXTREME SUFFERING AND MANNER OF PECULIAR DELIVERANCE.

AMONG those who suffered during the fearful progress of the Inquisition was one William Lithgow, a native of Scotland.

He was descended from a good family, and, having a natural propensity to traveling, he rambled, when very young, over the northern and western islands; after which, he visited France, Germany, Switzerland and Spain.

He set out on his travels in the month of March, 1609, first stopping at Paris, where he stayed some time, then, going through Germany and other parts, he arrived at Malaga, in Spain, the seat of all his misfortunes.

During his residence here, he contracted with the master of a French ship for his passage to Alexandria, but was prevented from going by the following circumstances.

At evening, on the 17th of October, 1620, the English fleet, at that time on a cruise against the Algerine rovers, came to anchor before Malaga, which threw the people of the town into the greatest consternation, as they imagined them to be Turks. The morning, however, discovered the mistake, and the governor, perceiving the cross of England in their colors, went on board Sir Robert Mansell's ship, who commanded on that expedition, and, after staying some time, returned to silence the fears of the people.

The next day several persons from on board the fleet came

ashore. Among these were a number well known by Lithgow, who, after reciprocal compliments, spent some days together in festivity and amusements of the town. They then invited him to go on board, and pay his respects to the admiral. He accordingly accepted the invitation, was kindly received by him, and detained till the next day, when the fleet sailed.

As soon as he got on shore, he proceeded toward his lodgings by a private way, when, in passing through a narrow, uninhabited street, he found himself suddenly surrounded by several officers, who threw a black cloak over him, and forcibly conducted him to the house of the governor. After some little time, the governor appeared, when Lithgow earnestly begged he might be informed of the cause of such violent treatment, but his only answer was a shake of the head, followed by strict orders that the prisoner should be closely watched till he returned from his devotions; directing, at the same time, that the principal officers in town should be summoned to appear at his examination, and all with the greatest secrecy, to prevent the knowledge of it reaching the ears of the English merchants then residing in town.

These orders were strictly discharged, and, on the governor's return, he and the officers having seated themselves, Lithgow was brought before them, and asked several questions, as,—of what country he was, whither bound, and how long he had been in Spain. The prisoner, after answering these and other questions, was conducted to a closet, where, in a short space of time, he was visited by a town-captain, who inquired whether he had ever been at Seville, or was lately come from thence; and, patting his cheeks with an air of friendship, conjured him to tell the truth: "For," said he, "your very countenance shows there is some hidden matter in your mind, which prudence should direct you to disclose." Finding himself, however, unable to extort any thing from the prisoner, he left him, and reported his success to the governor, upon which he was again brought before them, a general accusation laid against him, and made to swear that he would give true answers to such questions as might be asked him.

The governor then proceeded to inquire the quality of the English commander, and the prisoner's opinion what were the motives that prevented his accepting an invitation from him to come on shore. He demanded, likewise, the names of the English captains in the squadron, and what knowledge he had of the embarkation, or preparation for it before its departure for England. Upon his denying any knowledge of the matter, he was accused of being a traitor and spy, who came directly to favor and assist in the designs that were projected against Spain; and, that he had been, for that purpose, nine months in Seville, in order to procure intelligence of the time the Spanish navy was expected from the Indies. They exclaimed against his familiarity with the officers of the fleet and many other English gentlemen, between whom, they said, unusual civilities had passed, but they had all been carefully noticed.

Besides, to sum up the whole, and put the truth past all doubt, they said he came from a council of war, held that morning on board the admiral's ship, in order to put in execution the orders assigned him.

They upbraided him with being accessory to the burning of the island of St. Thomas, in the West Indies. "Wherefore," said they, "these Lutherans, ought to have no credit given to what they say or swear."

In vain did Lithgow endeavor to obviate every accusation laid against him, and to obtain belief from his prejudiced judges. He begged permission to send for his papers, which might serve to show his innocence. They complied with his request, thinking it would discover some things of which they were ignorant. They were accordingly brought, and on being opened, among other things, was found a license from king James the First, under the sign manual, setting forth the bearer's intention to travel into Egypt, which was treated by the haughty Spaniards with great contempt.

The other papers consisted of passports, testimonials, &c., of persons of quality. All these credentials, however, seemed rather to confirm than abate the suspicions of the judges, who after seizing all the prisoner's papers, ordered him to with-

draw. In the mean time a consultation was held, to fix the place where the prisoner should be confined.

The chief judge was for putting him in the town prison; but this was objected to by another, who said, "In order to prevent the knowledge of his confinement from reaching his countrymen, I will take the matter on myself, and be answerable for the consequences;" upon which it was agreed, that he should be confined in the governor's house, with the greatest secrecy. Every thing was taken from him, and he was conveyed to a retired room, and left to his own private contemplation.

The next day he received a visit from the governor, who promised him his liberty, with many other advantages, if he would confess being a spy; but on his protesting that he was entirely innocent, the governor left him in a rage, saying, he should see him no more till torments constrained him to confess; commanding the keeper, to whose care he was committed, that he should permit no person whatever, to have access to, or commune with him; that his sustenance should not exceed three ounces of musty bread, and a pint of water every second day; that he should be allowed neither bed, pillow, or covering. "Close up," said he, "this window in his room with lime and stone; stop up the holes of the door with double mats; let him have nothing that bears any relation to comfort." These, and several other orders of the like severity, were given to render it impossible for his condition to be known to those of the English nation.

In this wretched and melancholy condition, poor Lithgow continued for several days, in which time the governor received an answer to a letter he had written, relative to the prisoner from Madrid; and, pursuant to the instructions given him began to put in practice dreadful cruelties.

On the forty-seventh day of his imprisonment, about two o'clock in the morning, he heard a noise of a coach in the street, and sometime afterward heard the opening of the prison-doors, for he had no sleep for two nights, on account of his hunger, pain, and melancholy reflections.

Soon after, he was seized, placed in the coach, and carried

to a place without the town, where tortures awaited him. At day-break the next morning, arrived the governor and his officers, into whose presence Lithgow was brought to undergo another examination.

He desired he might have an interpreter, which was allowed to strangers by the laws of that country, but this was refused, nor would they permit him to appeal to Madrid, the superior court of judicature. After a long examination, which lasted from morning till night, there appeared in all his answers, so exact a conformity with what he had before said, that they declared he had learned them by heart, there being not the least prevarication. They, however, pressed him again to make a full discovery; that is, to accuse himself of crimes never committed, the governor adding, "You are still in my power; I can set you free if you comply; if not I must deliver you to the alcaid." As he still persisted in his innocence, the notary was ordered to draw up a warrant for delivering him up to be tortured.

In consequence of this, he was conducted to a stone gallery to be placed upon the rack, and his irons being taken off, he fell upon his knees, uttering a short prayer, that God would enable him to be steadfast, and courageously endure the trials before him.

It were impossible to conceive the extremity of suffering he endured for many hours. A little cordial was at last given him, more for the purpose of reserving him for future punishment, rather than from a principle of charity or compassion.

As a confirmation of this, orders were given for a coach to pass every morning before day, by the prison, that the noise made by it, might give fresh terror and alarm to the unhappy prisoner, and deprive him of all possibility of obtaining the least repose.

He continued in this dreadful situation, almost starved for want of the common necessaries to preserve his wretched existence, with little hope of ever being released from the power of the cruel Spaniards. Till this time, they had punished him for treason, but now they began upon his religion,

and finally gave him eight days to consider and resolve whether he would become a convert to their faith.

The inquisitor told him he, with other religious orders, would attend him for the purpose of rendering assistance thereto, and during one of their first interviews, he was asked, what he had on his conscience that prevented his conversion, to which he answered, "he had not any doubts in his mind, being confident in the promises of Christ, and assuredly believing His revealed will signified in the gospels, as professed in the reformed Catholic church, being confirmed by grace, and having infallible assurance thereby of the true christian faith." This obtained for him the appellation of "*absurd heretic*," and the like, upon which he told them, "it was not consistent with the nature and essence of religion and charity, to convince by opprobrious speeches, racks, and torments, but by arguments deduced from Scripture; and that all other methods would with him prove ineffectual."

The priests seeing that even the fear of the cruel sentence he had reason to expect would be pronounced against him, did not shake his constancy, left him to prepare for new scenes of cruelty. Oh, the wickedness of the human heart, when under the dominion of Satan!

So terrible had his situation become, that Lithgow longed for the day that should put a period to his sufferings; but his expectations were, by the interposition of Providence, happily rendered abortive, and his deliverance obtained through the interference of a Flemish youth, in the governor's house, who hazarded his life, by telling the tragical story of the prisoner's confinement and sufferings to an Englishman. By this means it reached the ears of the English ambassador, who presented a memorial to the king and council of Spain, and obtained an order for the sufferer's release. By these means, under God, Lithgow was restored from the most wretched spectacle, to a tolerable share of health and strength; but he lost the use of his left arm, and several of the smaller bones were so crushed and broken as to be ever after rendered useless.

We can not help indulging the reflection at the close, how

manifestly Providence interfered in behalf of this poor man, when he was on the brink of destruction; for by his sentence, from which there was no appeal, he would have been taken, in a few days, to Granada, and burnt to ashes. By such secondary means does Providence frequently interfere in behalf of the virtuous and oppressed, of which this is a most distinguished example.

CHAPTER XXIX.

George Wishart.

EFFORTS TO SPREAD THE GOSPEL; DECEPTION OF THE CARDINAL TO PUT AN END TO HIS LIFE; TRIUMPHANT FAITH AT THE LAST.

THIS man was born in Scotland, and was one of those noble spirits that Cambridge trained for usefulness, not only in literature, but also in religion. After leaving that institution, he traveled in various parts of the country, where he distinguished himself for his great learning and abilities, both in philosophy and divinity.

After being some time abroad, he returned to England, and took up his residence at Cambridge, where he was admitted a member of Bennet College.

Having taken his degrees, he entered into holy orders, and expounded the gospel in so clear and intelligible a manner, as highly to please his numerous auditors.

Being desirous of propagating the true gospel in his own country, he left Cambridge in 1554, and on his arrival in Scotland preached at Montrose, and afterward at Dundee. At the latter place he made a public exposition of the epistle to the Romans, which he went through with such grace and freedom, as greatly alarmed the papists.

In consequence of this, at the instigation of the archbishop, one of the principal men of Dundee went to the church where he was preaching, and in the midst of his discourse told

him not to trouble the town any more, for he was determined not to suffer it.

This sudden rebuff greatly surprised Wishart, who, after a short pause, looking sorrowfully on the speaker and the audience, said, "God is my witness, that I never minded your *trouble*, but your comfort; yea, your trouble is more grievous to me, than it is to yourselves; but I am assured, to refuse God's word, and to chase from you his messenger, shall not preserve you from trouble, but rather bring you into it; for God shall send you ministers that shall neither fear burning nor banishment. I have offered you the word of salvation. With the hazard of my life I have remained among you; now you, yourselves, refuse me; and I must leave my innocence to be declared by my God. If it be long prosperous with you, I am not led by the spirit of truth; but if unlooked for trouble come upon you, acknowledge the cause, and turn to God, who is gracious and merciful." At the close of this speech, he left the pulpit, and retired.

After this he went into the west of Scotland, where he preached God's word, which was gladly received by many. Here he received intelligence that the plague was broke out in Dundee. It began four days after he was prohibited from preaching there, and raged with such power that the number which died in the space of twenty-four hours, was almost beyond credit.

Notwithstanding the importunity of his friends, he determined to go there, saying, "They now need comfort. Perhaps this hand of God will make them now to magnify and reverence the word of God, which before they lightly esteemed."

He went, and met with a cordial reception from the godly. He chose the east gate for the place of his preaching; so that the healthy were within, and the sick without the gate. He took his first text from the words, "He sent his word and healed them."

In his sermon he chiefly dwelt upon the advantages and comfort of God's word, that judgments that follow the contempt or rejection of it, the freedom of God's grace to all his

people, and the happiness of his chosen, whom he takes to himself from out the miserable world.

The hearts of his hearers were so raised by the Divine force of his discourse, as not to regard death, but to count them the more happy who should then be called, not knowing whether they might have such a comforter again with them.

After this, the plague abated, though in the midst of it, Wishart constantly visited those that lay in the greatest extremity, and comforted them by his counsel. When he took his leave of the people of Dundee, he said, "That God had almost put an end to that plague, and that he was called to another place."

He went from thence to Montrose, where he sometimes preached, but spent most of his time in heavenly contemplation and prayer.

It is said that before he left the former place, while he was engaged in labors of love to the bodies, as well as to the souls, of the poor, afflicted people, the cardinal engaged a desperate popish priest to kill him, which attempt was made in the following manner.

One day, after he had finished his sermon, and the people had departed, the priest stood waiting at the bottom of the stairs, with a dagger in his hand, concealed under his robe. The minister having a sharp, piercing eye, and seeing the priest as he came from the pulpit, said to him, "My friend, what would you have?" and immediately putting his hand upon the dagger took it from him. The priest was so terrified that he fell upon his knees, confessed his intention, and sought pardon.

This created so much disturbance that those outside burst open the gate by force, and seeing the cause, were about to take the priest by force, when Wishart showed his forgiving spirit, by taking him in his arms, saying, "Whatsoever hurts him, shall hurt me; for he hath done me no mischief, but much good, by teaching me more caution for the time to come." By this conduct he saved the priest, and appeased the people. Baffled in this, the cardinal again conspired his death, causing a letter to be sent to him, as if it had been

from his familiar friend, the laird of Kinnier, in which he was desired to come to him in great haste, because he was taken with a sudden sickness.

In the meantime, the cardinal had provided sixty armed men, to lie in wait within a mile and a half of Montrose, in order to murder him as he passed that way.

The letter came to his hands by a boy, who also brought him a horse for the journey, upon seeing which he set forward, accompanied by some of his friends; but, something like a presentiment taking possession of his mind, he turned back, saying, "I will not go; I am forbidden of God; I am assured there is treason. Let some of you go yonder, and tell me what you find." They did so, and discovered the plot, which was quickly communicated to Wishart, which drew from him the remark, "I know I shall end my life by the hands of that bloodthirsty man, but it will not be in this manner."

A short time after this he left Montrose, and proceeded to Edinburg, in order to propagate the gospel in that city. Lodging with a faithful brother on the way, he arose to spend a season of the night watches in prayer, and, for the purpose, retired to a yard, which so attracted the attention and excited the curiosity of the inmates of the house that they importuned him to tell them the reason of his conduct. "I am assured," said he, "that my warfare is near at an end; and, therefore, pray to God with me that I shrink not when the battle waxeth hot."

The cardinal, intent upon his death, being informed that he was at this place, caused him to be apprehended, and immediately brought up for trial. No less than eighteen articles were exhibited against him, to each of which he answered with the greatest composure of mind, and in so learned and clear a manner as greatly surprised most of those who were present.

After the examination, the archbishop endeavored to prevail on him to recant; but he was too firmly fixed in his religious principles, and too much enlightened with the truth of the gospel to be in the least moved.

He was condemned to be burnt, and, with bags of gunpowder tied about his body, he was led to the stake, where he earnestly prayed, with Christ-like spirit, for the forgiveness of his murderers. The governor of the castle, who stood so near that he was singed with the flames, exhorted him in a few words to be of good cheer, and strengthen himself in the Lord. "This flame," said the martyr, "indeed occasions trouble to my body, but it hath in no wise broken my spirit. But he who now so proudly looks down upon me from yonder lofty place, (pointing to the cardinal,) shall, ere long, be as ignominiously thrown down as now he proudly lolls at his ease:" which prediction was soon after fulfilled.

The flames gathered strength, so that his voice was hushed, and, in less than an hour, the work was done; the pulsations of his heart were stilled, his race run, the victory gained, and his spirit safely gathered with the immortal ones around the throne in heaven.

CHAPTER XXX.

Lady Jane Grey.

CROWN BEQUEATHED HER BY EDWARD VI.; DEGRADED BY MARY; IMPRISONED AND FINALLY BEHEADED.

"SOONER would I forfeit ten thousand lives than relinquish a particle of those heavenly principles I have received from the suffrages of my blessed Redeemer."

This was the sentiment of one about to suffer death for his religion, nor was this spirit confined to man's sterner nature, with his strong powers of endurance.

Timid and gentle females, too, beautifully exemplified the power of the gospel, and gave themselves to death with a firmness that nothing could move. Faith, *all-conquering* faith,

enabled them to rise superior to the world, and bid defiance to their enemies.

Not those alone who trod the humble pathway of life, but those of higher birth, and of proud position, looked above, and perceiving the infinite superiority of heavenly things, and attracted by the glory of the blissful mansions, forsook the things of earth, and, with steady eye and trusting heart, "looked for a better country, even an heavenly."

Thus was it with the subject of this sketch. Though reared in affluence, and destined for the throne, her heart was by no means engrossed with these things; for, earthly riches and pleasures, its honors and emoluments, all grew dim before the unfading glories of the celestial world that beamed upon her soul from above.

Lady Jane was a daughter of the duke of Suffolk, and, during the long illness of Edward VI., she was married to Lord Guilford, son to the duke of Northumberland.

Soon after the consummation of the marriage, the increasing illness of the king rendered it necessary to establish some one upon the throne. He was prevailed upon to set aside, by his last will and testament, his two sisters, Mary and Elizabeth, and bequeathed his crown to Lady Jane.

To this order the king's council all subscribed, and all of the rest of the nobility and officers but one, who having given his consent to Mary's promotion, would on no account subscribe to any other.

This state of things greatly excited the envy of Mary, who forthwith wrote to the lords of the council, claiming the crown upon her brother's decease. The reply confirmed the title of Lady Jane, with words of caution to her to be a quiet and faithful subject if she would regard her own peace and interest. She immediately left London in a private manner, and drew about her a sufficient number of adherents to proclaim her queen, and by a series of unjustifiable wrongs, the bigoted Mary was seated on the throne of England.

No sooner was the sword of authority put into her hands, than she began to employ it against those who had supported the title of Lady Jane. This devoted victim remained with

her husband, Lord Guilford, almost five months in the Tower, waiting her pleasure, which was at last made known in speedy death.

The pious and christian lady heard her sentence with composure, for she had a home in the heavens, and a present Saviour to conduct her thither. A dark valley indeed—a swelling stream, lay between her and the bright fields of the better land, but faith quickly traversed these, and she saw how the hand of her enemies would hasten her departure, with emotions not unmingled with pleasure.

Two days before her death, a messenger was sent to her from the queen, to converse with her, and endeavor to turn her from the doctrine of Christ and the reformation, to the religion of popery.

"Madam," said he, as he came into her presence, "I lament your heavy case, and yet I doubt not you bear this sorrow of yours with a constant and patient mind."

"Welcome," said the christian lady, "if you come to give pious exhortation. As for my heavy case, I thank God, I little lament it, but rather account it a more manifest declaration of God's favor toward me, than ever he showed me before. Therefore there is no reason why you, or others which bear me no good will, should lament or be grieved, this being a thing so profitable for my soul's health."

A long conversation followed, in which the Lady Jane boldly avowed her christian opinions, and faith in Divine revelation.

Her visitor finally left her, saying, "I am sorry for you, for I am sure we two shall never meet again."

"True," said she, "we never shall unless God turn your heart, for I am assured that without a change it can never be."

As the state of her mind, the constancy and ardor of her faith, is particularly manifest in her letters written a short time previous to her death, we give a few extracts.

The first written to her father, who seemed disposed to favor Catholic views for sinister purposes, shows how she regarded death in a good cause; preferring it far above life employed against the truth.

"Although," said she, "it hath pleased God to hasten my death by you, by whom my life should rather have been lengthened, yet I can so praise God, as to yield him more hearty thanks, for shortening my woful days, than if all the world had been given unto my possession, with life lengthened at my own will. Though I am well assured of your impatient griefs, redoubled manifold ways, both in bewailing your own state and mine, yet my dear father, it seems in this I may count myself blessed, that washing my hands in innocency, my guiltless blood may cry before the Lord, '*Mercy to the innocent.*'

"Though I must needs acknowledge, that being constrained, in taking upon me I seemed to consent, and therein grievously offended the queen and her laws, yet do I assuredly trust, that this my offense toward God is so much the less, in that being in royal estate, mine enforced honor never blended with mine innocent heart.

"It may perhaps seem woful to you, that my death is so near at hand, but to me nothing can be more welcome, than from this vale of misery, to aspire to that heavenly throne of joy and pleasure with Christ my Saviour.

"In this steadfast faith God grant that we may continue till we may meet at last in heaven."

She afterward wrote a long letter to her father's chaplain, who had fallen from the truth of God's holy word, discovering a heart jealous for the cause of heaven, and in no wise absorbed with her own approaching doom.

"So oft," said she, "as I call to mind the dreadful and fearful saying, 'That he which layeth hold upon the plow, and looketh back, is not meet for the kingdom of heaven,' and, on the other side, the comforting words of Christ to those who forsake all for Him, I marvel at thee, and so lament thy case, that I am constrained to speak.

"If the terrible and thundering threatenings of Scripture can not stir thee to cleave unto Christ and his word, yet let its sweet consolations and promises, the example of the Saviour and his apostles, holy martyrs and confessors, encourage thee to take firmer hold on the Infinite.

"Be not ashamed to come home again with Mary, and weep bitterly with Peter, not only shedding the tears of your bodily eyes, but also pouring out the streams of your heart, to wash away out of the sight of God, the sin of your offensive fall.

"Be not ashamed to say with the publican, 'Lord, be merciful to me a sinner.'

"Last of all, let the lively remembrance of the last day be always before your eyes, remembering the terror that shall be in those who denied Christ, setting more by the world than by heaven; more by their life, than by him who gave them life, and, on the contrary, the inestimable joys prepared for them that fear no peril, nor dreading death, have manfully sought, and victoriously triumphed over all the powers of darkness, over death and hell, through the Captain of their salvation, who now stretcheth out his arms to receive you, ready to fall upon your neck and embrace you, and to feast you with the dainties of his own precious blood; which, undoubtedly, if it might stand with his determinate purpose, he would not scruple to shed again, rather than that you should be lost."

"Be constant, be constant and fear not for pain,
Christ hath redeemed thee, and heaven is thy gain."

We give only one more, and that one written the night before her execution, to her sister Catharine, which attended a copy of the New Testament she presented to her.

"I have here sent you a book," she says, "which, although it be not outwardly trimmed with gold, yet within is worth more than precious stones. It is the book, dear sister, of the law of the Lord. It is his testament and last will, which he bequeathed unto us; which shall lead you to the path of eternal joy—to an immortal and everlasting life, if you observe it with an earnest heart and holy purpose.

"It shall teach you to live, and learn you to die. It shall win you more than you would have gained by the possession of all your father's lands.

"If God had prospered him, these you would have inherited, but if you apply yourself diligently to this book, seeking

to direct your life by it, you shall be an inheritor of such riches, as neither the covetous shall withdraw from you, neither thief steal, or moth corrupt.

"Desire with David, dear sister, to understand the law of the Lord. Live still to die, that you may by death purchase eternal life.

"Defy the world, despise the flesh, and delight yourself only in God. Rejoice in him, as I do. Follow the steps of your Master, and take up your cross, and as touching my death, rejoice with me, that I am to be delivered of this corruption, and put on incorruption. I am assured, that I shall, for losing a mortal life, gain an immortal one, the which I pray God to grant you, and send you his grace, to live in his fear, and to die in the true christian faith, from the which I exhort you, that you never swerve, neither for hope of life or fear of death. If you cleave unto Him, He will prolong your days to His glory and your comfort; to which glory God brings me now, and you hereafter, when it pleaseth Him to call you. Farewell, good sister, put your trust in God, who only can help you."

Thus, as it were, her last breath was spent in exhorting others to remain true to the doctrines of the gospel.

The next day she was to mount the scaffold, and bow her head to the stroke of the executioner, but her frail nature was buoyed up by the everlasting arms, and in their circling power she was well satisfied.

As she stood before the multitude who assembled around her, she said, "Good people, I am come hither to die, being condemned by law to the same. The fact against the queen's highness was unlawful, and the consenting thereunto by me; but touching the desire, or procurement thereof, by me, or on my behalf, I do wash my hands in innocency before God, and the face of you, christian people, this day.

"I pray you to bear me witness that I die a true christian woman, and that I look to be saved by no other means, than by the mercy of God in Christ."

She then made the requisite preparations for her person, committed her soul to Christ, and laid her head upon the

block, and so finished her life on the 12th of February, in the year 1554, at 17 years of age.

Thus in the spring-time of life—the very bloom of youth, she closed her eyes upon this world to receive a martyr's crown above.

It is a singular circumstance related of the judge who condemned her, that soon after, he was deranged, and in his delirium cried out continually to have the Lady Jane taken from him. So bitterly did conscience reproach him for causing the death of the innocent, that it ended his days, shortening them in despair.

The memory of this noble lady, has ever been cherished with pious admiration, and will continue to be while there are any to revere the christian name, and magnify the grace of God.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Jerome, of Prague.

MEETS WITH THE WORKS OF WICKLIFFE AND ESPOUSES HIS DOCTRINE; IS CALLED BEFORE THE COUNCIL; GOES TO THE STAKE WITH CHRISTIAN FORTITUDE.

JEROME, of Prague, who was the companion of Huss, and may be said to be co-martyr with him, was born at Prague, and educated in that university, where he particularly distinguished himself for his great abilities and learning. He also visited several other learned seminaries in Europe, particularly the universities of Paris, Heidelberg, Cologne, and Oxford. At the latter place he became acquainted with the works of Wickliffe, and being a person of uncommon application, he translated many of them into his native language, having with great pains, made himself master of the English tongue.

On his return to Prague, he professed himself a strong admirer of Wickliffe, and finding that his doctrines had made

considerable progress in Bohemia, and that Huss was the principal promoter of them, he became his assistant in the great work of reformation.

On the 4th of April, 1415, he arrived at Constance, about three months before the death of Huss. He entered the town privately, and consulting with some of the leaders of his party, whom he found there, was easily convinced he could not be of any service to his friend.

Finding that his arrival was publicly known, and that the council intended to seize him, he thought it prudent to retire.

Accordingly, he went to Iberling, an imperial town about a mile from Constance.

From this place he wrote to the emperor, and proposed his readiness to appear before the council, if he would give him a safe conduct; but this was refused.

He then applied to the council, but met with an answer no less unfavorable than that from the emperor. Being thus disappointed, he caused papers to be put up in all the public places in Constance, particularly on the doors of the cardinals' houses, in which he professed his readiness to appear in the defense of his character and doctrine, both of which, he said had been greatly defamed.

He also declared, that if any error should be proved against him, he would with great readiness, retract it; begging only that the faith of the council might be given for his security. Not receiving any answer to the papers, he set out on his return to Bohemia.

He had the precaution to take with him a certificate, signed by several of the Bohemian nobility then at Constance, testifying that he had used all prudent means in his power to procure his hearing.

He did not, however, thus escape. He was seized at Hirsaw, by an officer belonging to the duke Sallsbach, who, though unauthorized so to act, had little doubt of obtaining the favor of the council, for what he deemed so acceptable a service.

The duke, having Jerome in his power, wrote to the

council for directions how to proceed. After expressing their obligations to the duke, they desired him to send the prisoner immediately to Constance. The elector palatine met him on the way, and conducted him into the city, himself riding on horseback, with a numerous retinue, who led Jerome in fetters by a long chain; and immediately on his arrival he was committed to a loathsome dungeon.

He was treated in nearly the same manner as Huss had been, only that he was much longer confined, and taken from one prison to another.

At length, being brought before the council, he desired that he might plead his own cause, and exculpate himself, which being refused him, he broke out into the following exclamation:

"What barbarity is this? For three hundred and forty days have I been confined in a variety of prisons. There is not a misery, there is not a want, which I have not experienced. To my enemies you have allowed the fullest scope of accusation: to me, you deny the least opportunity of defense. Not an hour will you now indulge me in preparing for my trial. You have listened to the blackest calumnies against me. You have represented me as an heretic, without knowing my doctrine; as an enemy to the faith, before you knew what faith I professed; as a persecutor of priests, before you could have any opportunity of understanding my sentiments on that head.

You are a general council; in you center all this world can communicate of gravity, wisdom, and sanctity; but still you are men, and men are seducible by appearances. The higher your character is for wisdom, the greater ought your care to be, not to deviate into folly.

The cause I now plead is not my own cause; it is the cause of men; it is the cause of christians; it is a cause, which is to affect the rights of posterity, however the experiment is to be made in my person."

This speceh had not the least effect. He was obliged to hear his charge read, which was reduced to five heads:

1. That he was a derider of the papal dignity.

2. An opposer of the pope.
3. An enemy to the cardinals.
4. A persecutor of the prelates.
5. An hater of the christian religion.

To each of these several charges Jerome answered with an amazing force of elocution, and strength of argument.

"Now," said he, "whither shall I turn me! To my accusers? My accusers are as deaf as adders. To you, my judges? You are all prepossessed by the arts of my accusers."

After this he was remanded to his dungeon. His trial was brought on the third day after his accusation, and witnesses were examined in support of the charge.

The prisoner was prepared for his defense, which appears almost incredible, when we consider that he had been three hundred and forty days shut up in prisons, deprived of daylight, and almost starved for want of common necessaries.

But his spirit soared above these disadvantages, under which a man less animated, would have sunk; nor was he more at a loss for quotations from fathers and ancient authors, than if he had been furnished with the finest library.

The most bigoted of the assembly were unwilling he should be heard, knowing what effect eloquence is apt to have on the minds of the most prejudiced. At length, however, it was carried by the majority, that he should have liberty to proceed in his defense, which he began in such an exalted strain of moving elocution, that the heart of obdurate zeal was seen to melt, and the mind of superstition seemed to admit a ray of conviction. He made an admirable distinction between evidence as resting on facts, and as supported by malice and calumny. He laid before the assembly the whole tenor of his life and conduct. He observed that the greatest and most holy men had been known to differ in points of speculation, with a view to distinguish truth, not to keep it concealed.

He expressed a noble contempt of all his enemies, who would have induced him to retract the cause of virtue and truth. He entered upon an high encomium on Huss; and declared he was ready to follow him in the glorious track of martyrdom.

The trial being over, he received the same sentence that had been passed upon his companion. In consequence of this he was, in the usual style of popish affectation, delivered over to the civil power; but as he was a layman he had not to undergo the ceremony of degradation which some had endured.

They had prepared a cap of paper, painted with hideous figures, which they put upon his head; upon which he meekly said, "The Lord Jesus, when he suffered death for me—a miserable sinner, wore a crown of thorns upon his head; and I, for his sake, will wear this."

Two days were allowed him in hopes that he would recant; in which time the cardinal of Florence used his utmost endeavors to bring him over. But they all proved ineffectual. He was resolved to seal his doctrine with his blood; and he suffered death with the most distinguished magnanimity.

In going to the place of execution he sung several hymns; and when he came to the spot, which was the same where Huss had been burnt, he kneeled down and prayed fervently. He embraced the stake with great cheerfulness and resolution; and when the executioner went behind him to set fire to the fagots, he said, "Come here, and kindle it before my eyes; for if I had been afraid of it, I had not come to this place, having had so many opportunities to escape."

The fire being kindled, he sung a hymn, but was soon interrupted by the flames; and the last words he was heard to say were these:

"This soul in flames, I offer, Christ, to thee!"

CHAPTER XXXII.

John Rogers.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF CONVERSION; PERSECUTION UNDER MARY; GIVES HIS LIFE IN DEFENSE OF THE GOSPEL.

JOHN ROGERS, vicar of St. Sepulchre's, and reader of St. Paul's, London, was educated in the university of Cambridge, and, at length, chosen chaplain to the English factory at Antwerp, in Brabant. There he became acquainted with one Tindal, whom he assisted in his translation of the New Testament, and with Miles Coverdale, who, with several other worthy Protestants, had been driven out of England, on account of the persecutions in the latter end of the reign of Henry VIII.

By conversation with these worthy and pious servants of God, he came to a knowledge of the Scriptures, and thus became deeply enlisted in the Redeemer's kingdom, desiring to spend his energies in the holy cause.

He went to Wittenberg, in Saxony, where, through indefatigable study and application, he attained such a knowledge of the Dutch language as to be capable of taking charge of a christian congregation in that part of Europe.

He cast off all popish superstitions, idolatry and restrictions, and labored faithfully and diligently in the service of his heavenly master, until it pleased God to dispel the mists of popish darkness from his native country, and restore the glorious light of the pure gospel, by the introduction of his chosen servant, Edward VI., to the throne of England.

Being then called, he left his living in Saxony and went to England to preach the gospel without any previous condition, appointment, or establishment whatever. Thus do we see the holy zeal and disinterestedness of these men in extending the triumphs of the cross. It was not the applause of men they sought, for this they knew they would not obtain; it was not

the wealth and good things of this world that influenced them, for it oftener deprived them of what they had; neither was it love of ease, or pride of position, for it was attended with exhausting labor, and exposed them to privation, suffering and death in a variety of forms. It was the simple power of the gospel that moved them, and this was mightier than the combined attractions of the world.

After laboring in the vineyard of Christ with great success for some time, Dr. Ridley, then bishop of London, gave Rogers a prebend in his cathedral church of St. Paul's; of which he was afterward chosen by the dean a divinity lecturer, or reader of divinity in that church.

Here he continued till queen Mary, soon after her accession, banished the true religion, and again introduced the superstition and idolatry of the Church of Rome, with all the horrid cruelties of blood-thirsty Antichrist.

When Mary was in the Tower of London, imbibing Gardiner's pernicious counsels, Rogers preached at Paul's-cross, confirming those doctrines which he and others taught there in king Edward's days, and exhorted the people, with peculiar energy, to continue steadfast in the same, and to beware of the false tenets of pestilent popery.

For this sermon the preacher was summoned before the council, then filled with popish bishops, before whom he pleaded his cause in so pious, bold, and yet prudent a manner as to obviate their displeasure for a time, and procure his dismissal.

But, after Mary's proclamation to prohibit the preaching of the doctrines of the reformed religion, for a contempt of the same, he was again summoned before a council of bishops, who, after having debated upon the nature of his offense, ordered him to keep close prisoner in his own house, from which he never departed, though he had many fair opportunities to escape.

He saw the recovery of the true religion, at that time, desperate; he knew he should want for a living in Germany, sufficient for the wants of a large family, consisting of a wife and ten children; but, all these considerations could not move

him. He determined, resolutely, after he had been called to answer for Christ's cause, not to desert it; and resolved to hazard his life in support of the truth.

In this state of confinement he remained a considerable time, till, at the instigation of the cruel Bonner, bishop of London, he was removed from his own house to Newgate, and placed among the common felons.

What passed between him and the adversaries of Christ, during the time of his imprisonment, is not certainly known. Some account of his examinations, in his own handwriting, have been preserved, which show a firm adherence to gospel truth on his part, notwithstanding the fearful and repeated threats of wicked men.

He continued in prison nearly a year and a half, cheerful and earnest in all his pursuits; writing much, and doing good as he had opportunity.

At length, on a morning of February, he was suddenly aroused from his slumber with the intelligence that he must prepare for the flames, which awaited him. One thing only he asked,—the privilege of meeting with his family once more ere he went from them forever; but, the cruel heart of his merciless tormentor would not allow him even this, and he was led to the stake with the expectation of never seeing them more in this world.

They met him on the way, however, and, be it ascribed to the all-sustaining power of the gospel, the sight of his sorrowing and afflicted family moved him not.

Doubtless he gazed on them with all a father's yearning affection, and a husband's tender sympathy, and would gladly have remained to lead them on through the troubled paths of life, were it the Divine will. But his obligations to God were paramount to all others, and he cheerfully resigned the dearest, sweetest pleasures of this life at the call of his Heavenly Master, and gained thereby the more precious joys in the kingdom above.

He was asked to recant his opinions, to which he answered, "That what he had preached he would seal with his blood." "Then," said the sheriff, "thou art an heretic" To this he

replied, "That shall be known at the day of judgment." This, of course, excited the rage of his persecutors, and hastened them to perform the deed, which only more speedily introduced him to a far happier scene.

For the defense of the gospel of Christ he took his death with wonderful patience, and ascended from a bed of flames to the throne on high, there to receive the approving sentence of heaven, and to enter upon the everlasting reward of the faithful in a world of eternal joy and blessedness.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

John Hooper.

SPIRITUAL LIFE; FILLS THE PLACE OF STEWARD; FLEES FOR HIS LIFE; RETURNS, AND IS CHOSEN BISHOP; EXPULSION, AND FINAL CONDEMNATION.

OOPER was a student and graduate in the university of Oxford, where he distinguished himself for his abundant proficiency in the sciences, which, united with his present love for the Holy Scriptures, eminently fitted him for the work of maintaining and defending the true religion.

Growing more and more, by God's grace, in ripeness of spiritual understanding, and manifesting the fervency of his spirit, being then about the time of excitement in the reign of Henry VIII., he obtained the displeasure and hatred of certain doctors at Oxford, who began to stir up opposition against him, whereby, and especially by the procurement of one Dr. Smith, he was compelled to quit the university. Removing from thence, he was received into the house of Sir Thomas Arundel, and became his steward, till the intelligence of his opinions and religion were made known to him. He did not favor the christian views of Hooper, but felt a very particular regard for him as a man. He found means to send him with a message to the bishop of Winchester, at the same

time secretly writing a letter to him, with a request that, in any case, his servant might be sent back to him.

The bishop, after long conference with Hooper, four or five days together, at length perceiving that he could neither do that good which he thought to him, nor that he would take any good at his hand, according to Arundel's request, sent him home again, commending him for his learning and wit, but yet harboring ill-will in his breast, against the man.

Not long after this, as malice is always working evil, intelligence was given to him, to provide for himself, as danger threatened him.

Upon this Hooper took his journey to the sea-side to go to France, and reaching Paris, he tarried there for a little season, but in a short time returned to England again, where he was entertained by a friend till he was molested and sought for the second time.

This compelled him to take to the seas, and he escaped through France, to the higher parts of Germany, where he formed an acquaintance with several learned men, who honored him with their intimate friendship, and made his stay there both profitable and pleasant.

At Zurich, he applied himself very studiously to the study of the Hebrew language, and here also he married his wife, who was a Burgonian.

At length God saw fit to give a season of rest and comparative quiet unto the churches, under the reign of king Edward; and among the English exiles, who then repaired homeward, was Hooper, who was desirous of helping forward the Lord's work to the utmost of his ability in his native place. His German friends, who had formed a strong attachment for him, bade him a reluctant adieu, sorrowing for themselves, but rejoicing for the church of Christ which would be so much benefited by his labors.

On coming to London, he preached continually, at least, once every day and oftentimes twice.

In his sermons, according to his accustomed manner, he corrected sin, and sharply inveighed against the iniquity of the world, and corrupt abuses of the church.

Multitudes flocked daily to hear his voice, as the most melodious sound of Orpheus harp, insomuch that often when he was preaching, the church was insufficient to contain those who attempted to find entrance.

In his doctrine he was earnest, in tongue eloquent, in the Scriptures perfect, and in pains indefatigable.

He was of sound body, firm health, keen wit, and invincible patience, which enabled him to sustain whatever sinister fortune and adversity could do.

He bore in countenance and conversation a certain reserve and grace, which some perhaps might have wished more popular and familiar; but such were his views of life, and his impressions of the future, that it made him thus, to a great degree. So calculated was his whole bearing to inspire a feeling of awe, that every one could not approach him.

An honest citizen once came to his door for counsel, but being abashed at his seemingly austere appearance, he was deterred from his purpose, and departed to seek from others the desired aid.

From the duties of an ordinary minister, he was called to preach before the king's majesty, and soon after made bishop of Gloucester by the king's commandment. In that office he continued two years, and so secured the confidence and respect of the people, that even his enemies could find no occasion to speak against him, although they sought it.

Animated by the highest and purest motives, he labored incessantly to save the souls of his flock. He was chosen bishop, and no father in his household, no gardener in his garden, nor husbandman in his vineyard, was more diligently or better occupied, than he in his diocese among his flock, going about his towns and villages in teaching and preaching to the people there. The time he had to spare from his ministerial labors, he bestowed either in hearing public causes, or else in private study, prayer, and visiting of schools. With his continual doctrine, he united due and discreet correction, and to none was it given more severely, than to those who for abundance of riches and wealthy state, thought themselves exonerated from the duties of ordinary christian citizens.

In this manner, he executed the office of a most careful and vigilant pastor, for the space of two years or more, it being in the time of king Edward, when christianity was somewhat nourished.

On the accession of Mary to the throne, religion was subverted and changed, and this good bishop was one of the first who was sent for to London to answer to the charges of his enemies. His holy manner of living stirred up the opposition of those unacquainted with the pure doctrines of the cross, and they sought in his persecution the gratification of their envious, malicious feelings.

His friends admonished him to take precautions for the safety of his life, and, though not ignorant of the danger which threatened him, he was regardless of their admonitions, saying, "Once did I flee, and take me to my feet; but, now, because I am called to this place and vocation, I am thoroughly persuaded to tarry, and to live and die with my flock."

Accordingly, he prepared to appear before the bishop of London, and was there summoned to come before the queen and her council, to answer to certain bonds and obligations, wherein, as they represented, he was bound to her. His fearless declaration of his innocency cleared himself, but the willful blindness of his accusers prevented them from doing justice to the man, and he was deprived at once of the privilege, so dear to him, of preaching Christ to perishing men. Nor were they content with this. It was not enough to silence that voice whose tones had sounded so sweetly in the ears of sin-sick men, telling of peace and pardon, rest and joy, beyond the reach of persecuting mortals. They procured his condemnation, delivered him over to the sheriffs, and led him to the city of Newgate in the evening, taking care to extinguish the lights on the way, thinking darkness the fittest for the execution of their unhallowed purposes.

Notwithstanding this device, the news of his coming had preceded him, and many came to their doors with lights, and saluted him, praising God for his constancy in the true doctrine which he had taught them, and desiring God to strengthen him in the same to the end.

He was committed to prison, where he was kept six days, denied the pleasure of intercourse with any one. Though human sympathy was not allowed him, we may well suppose his spirit was cheered by such manifestations of his Saviour's approving countenance as to more than compensate for the withdrawal of earth's best good.

Upon his keeper's communicating the intelligence to him that he would probably return to Gloucester to suffer death, he was filled with joy, because, in such case, he could confirm the truth which he had taught the people there by his death, not doubting but that he should, through Divine grace, be enabled to triumph in the last hour. He was, at length, conducted thither, surrounded by a band of men as a guard, and on his arrival was greeted by an old friend, who expressed much sorrow that he was to meet with such a fate.

"True," said Hooper, "death is bitter, and life is sweet; but, consider that the *death* to come is more bitter, and the *life* to cóme is more sweet. Therefore, for the desire and love I have to the one, and terror and fear of the other, I do not much regard this death, nor esteem this life, but have settled myself, through the strength of God's spirit, patiently to pass through the torments and extremities of the fire rather than to deny the truth of his word, desiring you and others, in the meantime, to commend me to God's mercy in your prayers."

He had intercourse with several of his friends, and was then conducted to his chamber, where he requested to be left alone till the hour of his execution.

It came, and seven thousand people assembled to witness the closing scene of this good man's life. As he came to the place appointed for him to die, he smilingly beheld the stake and the preparation made for him, which was under an elm tree near the college where he had been wont to preach.

Here a pardon was offered him, if he would avow himself a supporter of the queen's religion, but he rejected it with holy contempt, saying, "If you love my soul, away with it."

Orders were immediately given to dispatch him quickly, and forthwith preparations were made to bind him to the stake. "You have no need thus to trouble yourselves," said

he, "I doubt not God will give me strength sufficient to abide the extremity of the fire, without bands; notwithstanding, suspecting the weakness and frailty of the flesh, I am content you shall do as you think best." He was bound, a slow fire kindled, and for three-quarters of an hour he quietly endured the flames, and then resigned his breath, to enter those blissful mansions prepared for the faithful in Christ before the foundation of the world. Through "much tribulation," indeed, he entered the kingdom; but, the victory once gained, it is gained for ever.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Rowland Taylor.

FAITHFUL PREACHING; CAUSE OF APPREHENSION; APPEARANCE BEFORE THE BISHOP; SENTENCE OF CONDEMNATION.

THE town of Hadley was one of the first that received the word of God, at the preaching of the Rev. Thomas Bilney; by whose industry the gospel of Christ took such root there, that a great number became exceedingly well learned in the Holy Scriptures, as well women as men.

In this parish Dr. Rowland Taylor was a vicar; a man of eminent learning, and who had been admitted to the degree of doctor of the civil and canon law.

His attachment to the pure and uncorrupted principles of christianity recommended him to the favor and friendship of Dr. Cranmer, archbishop of Canterbury, with whom he lived a considerable time, till through his interest he obtained the living of Hadley. This charge he attended with the utmost diligence and assiduity, recommending and enforcing the doctrines of the gospel not only by his judicious discourses from the pulpit, but also by the whole tenor of his life and conversation.

His faith was sound, and consequently productive of good

works: that faith indeed, which in Scripture is deemed the gift of God,—is always known by its fruits, according to the apostle James. "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."

Thus he continued promoting the interests of the great Redeemer, and the souls of mankind, both by his preaching and example, during the reign of king Edward VI., but on his demise, and the succession of queen Mary to the throne, he escaped not the cloud that burst on so many beside; for two of his parishioners, Foster, an attorney, and Clark, a tradesman, out of blind zeal, resolved that mass should be celebrated in all its superstitious forms, in the parish church of Hadley, on Monday before Easter; nay, they had even caused an altar to be built in the chancel for that purpose, which being pulled down by the Protestant inhabitants, they erected another, and prevailed with the minister of an adjacent parish to celebrate mass in the passion week.

The doctor being employed in his study, was alarmed at the ringing of bells at an unusual time, but went to the church to inquire the cause. He found the great doors fast, but lifting up the latch of the chancel door, he entered and was not a little surprised, to see a priest in his habit prepared to celebrate mass, guarded by a party of men under arms to prevent interruption.

Dr. Taylor, being vicar of the parish, demanded of the priest the cause of such proceeding without his knowledge or consent; and how he dared profane the temple of God with abominable idolatries. Foster, the lawyer, insolently replied, "Thou traitor, how darest thou to intercept the execution of the queen's orders;" but the doctor undauntedly denied the charge of traitor, and asserted his mission as a minister of Christ, and delegation to that part of his flock, commanding the priest, as a wolf in sheep's clothing, to depart, nor infect the pure church of God with popish idolatry. A violent altercation then ensued, between Foster and Taylor, the former asserting the queen's prerogative, and the other the authority of the canon law, which commanded that no mass be said, but at a consecrated altar.

The priest, intimidated by the intrepid behavior of the Protestant minister, would have departed without saying mass, but Clark said to him, Fear not, you have a *supre attare*, (which is a consecrated stone, commonly about a foot square, which the popish priests carry instead of an altar, when they say mass in gentlemen's houses,) proceed and do your duty.

They then forced the doctor out of the church, celebrated mass, and immediately informed the lord chancellor, bishop of Winchester, of his behavior, who summoned him to appear before him, and answer the complaints that were alleged against him.

Upon receipt of the summons, the doctor cheerfully prepared to obey the same; and on some of his friends advising him to fly beyond the sea, in order to avoid the cruelty of his inveterate enemies, he told them that he was determined to go to the bishop, being ready and willing to declare the motives of his behavior to the popish emissaries, and defend the doctrines he had taught, as well as persuaded that he could not die in a better cause; so having committed his people to the care of a pious and faithful minister of Christ, he repaired to London, and waited on the bishop. As may be supposed, he was reviled and reproached, but in the spirit of meekness, declared himself a true subject and christian man. "Knowest thou not who I am?" said the bishop. "Yes!" replied the worthy minister, "thou art Dr. Stephen Gardiner, bishop of Winchester, and lord chancellor, and yet but a mortal man. But if I should be afraid of your lordly looks, why fear you not God, the Lord of us all? How dare you look any christian man in the face, seeing you have forsaken the truth, denied the Saviour and his word, and done contrary to your own oath and writing? With what countenance will you appear before the judgment seat of Christ to answer for yourself?"

A long examination followed, in which the doctor boldly rebuked his adversaries, and fearlessly maintained his own position, as did two or three of kindred spirit, who were with him. When the bishops saw them so bold, and immovably

fixed in the truth, they read the sentence of death upon them, which, when they heard, they joyfully gave thanks to God, and said: "We doubt not but God, the righteous Judge, will require our blood at your hands; and the proudest of you all shall repent this receiving again of Antichrist, and your tyranny that you now shew against the flock of Christ."

The doctor being condemned, was committed to the Clink, and the keepers were charged to keep him straitly; "for you have now another manner of charge," said the lord chancellor "than you have had before; therefore look you, take heed to it."

When the keeper brought him toward the prison, the people flocked about to gaze upon him; unto whom he said, "God be praised, good people, I am come away from them undefiled, and will confirm the truth with my blood."

He was confined in the Clink, till toward night, and then removed to the Compter, where he remained about a week, during which, he was repeatedly solicited to renounce the christian faith, but threats and menaces availed not; he was true and firm.

Here his family visited him, and received from him kind and christian counsel, and an earnest exhortation to remain steadfast unto Christ and his word.

Finding there was no hope of his recantation, he was ordered to repair to the place appointed for his death, which he did joyfully, as one going to a pleasant banquet.

He moved those about him to tears, in his earnest calling upon them to repent and turn to Christ; and excited their wonder by his constancy and steadfastness, and his readiness to die.

Multitudes gathered about him, grieved to part with so good a man, but he neared the stake with holy triumph, and saw the faggots kindled about him;—welcoming them as the instruments that should release his spirit from its mortal tenement, and transport it to those regions where nothing could harm him.

Thus rendered this man of God his soul into the hands of

his merciful Father and Saviour, whom he most intensely loved, faithfully and earnestly preached, obediently followed in life, and glorified in death.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Rawlins White.

PIETY IN HUMBLE LIFE; EFFORTS TO BECOME ACQUAINTED WITH SCRIPTURAL TRUTH; FIRMNESS UNTO DEATH IN THE GOOD CAUSE.

IT WAS not those alone of eminent attainments in learning, and high position in the church of Christ, that had the fortitude to seal the truth with their blood. Many of humble abilities, in the lowly walks of life, exhibited quite as much firmness and constancy in the good cause as they.

Rawlins White was a poor fisherman, and for a long time a partaker of the superstition and idolatry prevalent in the reign of Henry Eighth. But after God, in his mercy, had raised up the light of the gospel under the milder government of Edward Sixth, he began to dislike his former ways, and strongly desire a *better* and *more enduring* way.

He was altogether unlearned, and withal very simple, and he knew no way whereby he might satisfy his desires.

At length it came into his mind, to employ a special remedy to supply his necessity, which was this: He had a little boy, whom he resolved to send to school to learn to read English. He did so, and when he could read indifferently well, his father, every night, summer and winter, would seat him by his side and listen, while he read the Bible, or now and then some good book.

In this exercise the old man had such pleasure, and laid up such portions in his memory, that within a few years he was able to admonish and instruct others; and therefore when occasion served, he would go from one place to another, visiting those he had the most hope of profiting.

In this way he became a notable and open professor of the truth, and showed such correctness in rehearsing texts of Scripture, that it is said, men of riper and more profound knowledge, by their notes and other helps of memory, could scarcely compare with him.

After the death of Edward, he was obliged to be more quiet in his exhortations, and in some private place he would call his trusty friends together, and pass away the time in earnest prayer, and contemplation of heavenly truth, and thus was instrumental in the conversion of many, and doubtless would have been of many more, had not the cruel storm of persecution begun. He was at last so pursued by the enemies of christianity, that he was in hourly expectation of being forced to prison; whereupon, many, who had received comfort from his instructions, resorted unto him, earnestly persuading him to dispose of his goods for the use of his wife and children, and flee from the imminent danger which threatened him personally.

He thanked them heartily for their kind intentions, but stood unmoved by their persuasions, telling them plainly, that he had learned one good lesson touching the confession and denial of Christ;—that if he, upon their solicitation, should presume to deny Christ, Christ in the last day would deny and utterly condemn him; "and therefore, by His grace," said he, "I will confess and bear witness of Him before men, that I may find in Him everlasting life."

Notwithstanding this answer, his friends were still very importunate with him, but he adhered firmly to his purpose, till at last, he was taken by the officers of the town, as one suspected of heresy, and brought before the bishop, by whom, after many conflicts, he was committed to prison. He was afterward removed to a castle, where he was confined for the space of twelve months, and then taken out for further trial. While before the bishop, he endeavored by various means to reduce him to some conformity, but finding his threatening words and flattering promises ineffectual, he desired him to advise and determine with himself, either to recant his opinions, or else to suffer the rigor of the law, and

gave him a time to consider and decide. The day being come, the bishop, with his chaplains, went into the chapel, with a great number of the neighbors that had the curiosity to witness the proceedings.

When the bishop and his retinue were placed in order, the prisoner was brought before them, and, after a long discourse, declaring the cause for which he was sent, the bishop said, "If you will shew yourself penitent for that which you have done toward God and the law, we are ready to shew you favor; but, if by no means we can persuade you touching your reformation, we are determined upon administering the law." When he had made an end of speaking, Rawlins boldly replied, "My lord, I thank God, I am a christian man, and I hold no opinions contrary to the word of God; and, if I do, I desire to be reformed out of the word of God, as a christian man ought to be." Seeing that he would in no wise recant, the bishop told him plainly that he must proceed against him by the law, and condemn him as an heretic.

"Proceed in your law," said Rawlins; "but, for an heretic you shall never condemn me, while the world stands."

"But," said the bishop, turning to his company, "before we proceed any further with him, let us pray to God that he would send some spark of grace upon him, and it may, perhaps, be that God, through our prayers, will here turn his heart."

When Rawlins heard this, he said, "Ah! my lord, now you deal well and like a godly bishop, and I thank you most heartily for your great charity and gentleness. Christ saith, 'where two or three are gathered together in my name, I will be in the midst of them;' and there is more than two or three of you. Now, if it be so that your request be godly and lawful, and that ye pray as ye should pray, without doubt, God will hear you. And, therefore, my lord, do you pray to your God, and I will pray to mine. I know that my God will both hear my prayer and perform my desire."

The bishop with his company then prayed, during which time the man condemned by mortals found freedom of spirit in his converse with the Eternal.

As they arose, the bishop said, "Now, Rawlins, how is it with thee? Wilt thou revoke thy opinions or no?" "Surely, my lord," was the reply, "Rawlins you left me, Rawlins you find me, and, by the grace of God, Rawlins I will continue. If your petitions had been just and lawful, God would have heard them; but, you honor a false God, and pray not as you should pray, and, therefore, God has not granted your desire. But, I am a poor simple, as you see, and God has heard my complaint, and I trust he will strengthen me in his own cause."

When the bishop perceived this hypocrisy of theirs took no effect, his indignation moved him to pass immediate sentence of condemnation; but, at the suggestion of his chaplain, it was thought best to say mass, thinking it possible a change might still be wrought in the feelings of the good man.

But he interrupted them in the midst of it, saying, "Good people, if there be any brethren among you, or, at least, if there be but one brother, the same one bear witness at the day of judgment that I bow not to this idol."

His steadfastness remained such they dismissed all hopes of producing recantation, and committed him to prison, where he remained for some time.

About three weeks before he suffered, the head officers of the town, that had the charge of his execution, were determined to burn him, that they might be the sooner rid of him, although they had no writ to that effect, as the law required. This, however, was speedily obtained, and a guard was sent to conduct him to the stake.

As he beheld them, on their approach, he said, "What meaneth all this? By God's grace, I will not run away; with all my heart and mind, I give God most hearty thanks that he hath made me worthy to abide all this for his name's sake."

On his way he met his wife and children, the sight of whom so affected him the tears coursed down his cheeks; but, immediately striking upon his breast, he exclaimed, "Ah! flesh, hinderest thou me so? Wouldst thou fain prevail?

Well! I tell thee, do what thou canst, thou shalt not, by God's grace, have the victory."

From this time he went on cheerfully, and, on reaching the stake, embraced it, rejoicing to die for the testimony of God's truth.

"Bind me fast," said he, "for it may be the flesh will strive mightily; but, God of his great mercy give me strength and patience to abide the extremity."

It was even as he desired, and, in the sixtieth year of his age, he thus fell asleep in Jesus.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Lawrence Saunders.

EARLY PREDILECTION FOR A MINISTER'S LIFE; APPREHENDED FOR TREASON, AND BURNT AT THE STAKE.

AFTER queen Mary, by public proclamation, in the first year of her reign, had prohibited the preaching of God's word, several pious ministers, who had the charge of souls committed to them, continued to feed their flock faithfully, not as those authorized by public authority, as in the happy days of king Edward, but as private pastors of particular flocks.

Among these was Lawrence Saunders, a man eminently devoted to the work of the gospel ministry. He had been brought up in learning from his youth, and was chosen from the school of Eton, to go to the king's college in Cambridge, where he continued a scholar three years, making remarkable proficiency in the various departments of learning.

Shortly after, he visited his widowed mother, who was desirous of his becoming a merchant, and in obedience to her solicitations, he entered the store of a merchant in London.

Thus, by the mind of his friends, he must needs have been engaged in secular pursuits; but God, who hath his secret

working in all things, saw better for his servant, as it proved in the end. Although bound by indenture, the Lord so wrought upon his mind by His spirit, that he could feel no interest in his vocation; and while his companions were busily occupied in their trade, he would withdraw himself to some solitary place, and there spend his time in contemplations of a different nature.

His master was a good man, and observing this disposition in the young man, called him, and inquired into the cause of his apparent melancholy and indifference. Saunders declared his preference for a more spiritual life, and like a good and benevolent man, the merchant gave him his indentures, and set him free. Delighted in being no longer in the traffic of merchandise, he returned again to study in Cambridge, where he began to add to the knowledge of the Latin, the study of the Greek and Hebrew, to which he united a diligent perusal of the Scriptures, to furnish himself for the office of preacher.

His application was painful and severe, and his improvement consequently very rapid.

In the beginning of Edward's reign, when gospel religion was introduced, he obtained license, and began to preach, and was so well liked of those who then had authority, that they appointed him to read divinity lectures, in the college at Fothringham, where by doctrine and life, he edified the pious, drew many ignorant to the knowledge of salvation, and stopped the mouths of adversaries.

He labored in different places, till the time of the disturbance occasioned by the claim that Mary made to the crown. At the beginning of the excitement, he preached at Northampton, interfering not however with state affairs, but boldly spoke against popish doctrines, which were like to spring up again in England. The queen's party heard it, and were so highly displeased, that they kept him among them as a prisoner. They finally dismissed him, as no law was broken by his preaching, which would warrant his detention. Seeing the dreadful days at hand, and inflamed with holy zeal, he renewed his christian efforts with new diligence, till he was

again arrested in his work, by one of the queen's counselors. Overtaking Saunders one day, he asked him whither he went? "I have a charge," said he, "in London, and I go to instruct them, according to my duty." "Follow my counsel," said the man, "and let them alone." "How then shall I be discharged before God," said the godly minister, "if any be sick, and desire consolation, if any want good counsel, and need instruction? or if any should slip into error, and receive false doctrine?"

Both went on their way, the one to do the will of his Master in heaven, the other to further his own selfish designs, by informing the queen against a good man. She sent an officer to take him in the midst of his preaching, and bring him before the bishop, on a charge of treason for breaking the queen's proclamation, and also for his sermon which savored of sedition and heresy.

He was tried as an heretic, and during his examination, he was requested to write his views of transubstantiation. He did so, saying, "My lord, you seek my blood, and you shall have it. I pray God, that you may be so baptized with it, that hereafter you may become a better man."

The bishop, when he had his will, sent him to the lord-chancellor, as Annas sent Christ to Caiaphas; and he found like favor with his Master before him.

"Carry him to prison," was the cry, and as he heard it, he gave God thanks that he had found a place of rest and quiet, where he might pray for the conversion of souls.

So true is it, that

> "Prayer is the christian's vital breath,
> The christian's native air."

He remained in prison fifteen months, during which time he wrote many letters to his friends, full of christian confidence and heavenly consolation.

He was finally degraded, and condemned to be burnt, and on the 8th of February, 1555, he was led to the stake. He was naturally of a very timid disposition, but went to the place of execution with cheerful courage, a conqueror through Him who died upon the cross.

He embraced the stake, and kissed it, saying, "Welcome the cross of Christ, welcome, everlasting life," and soon fell asleep in the Lord, forever to enjoy the full fruition of those blessed hopes which enabled him to meet death so triumphantly.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Thomas Hawks.

BRIGHT EXAMPLE OF INTEGRITY AND DEVOTION; TRIUMPH IN THE HOUR OF HIS DISSOLUTION.

THOMAS HAWKS was of the county of Essex, in calling and profession a courtier, brought up in affluence from his childhood, with the advantages of refined and polished society.

Besides, he was of such comeliness of person by nature so well endowed with excellent qualities, that he might seem to be a man, as it were, made for the purpose.

But his gentle behaviour toward others, and especially his fervent study and singular love unto true religion and piety, surmounted all the rest.

"Wherein," says an English writer, "God did singularly adorn him, even so he, being such a valiant martyr of God, may seem to make famous the whole company of other holy martyrs, and, as a bright star, to make the church of God and his truth of themselves bright and clear, more gloriously to shine by his example." For, if the conquests of martyrs are triumphs of Christ, as Ambrose declares, undoubtedly, Christ in few men hath either conquered more notably, or triumphed more gloriously, than in this young man; he stood so wisely in his cause, so pious in his life, and so constant in his death.

Following the fashion of the court at first, as he grew in years, he entered service with the lord of Oxford, where he

remained for a considerable time, being highly esteemed and loved by all the household, so long as Edward the Sixth lived. After his death all things began to go backward, religion to decay, true piety not only to wax cold but also to be in danger every where, especially in the houses of great men.

Hawks, disliking this state of things, and particularly in such men's houses, rather than he would change the profession of true godliness, which he had tasted, thought to change the place; and, forsaking the nobleman's house, he departed to his own home, where he might more freely give himself to the service of God, and enjoy the freedom of his own conscience.

But what place in this world shall a man find so secret for himself, whither the adversary can not creep, fully intent on measures to disturb the quietness of the godly? He had a young child, whose baptism was deferred, because he would not suffer it to take place after the manner of the papists. This excited the indignation of his adversaries, who immediately laid hands on him, and brought him before the earl of Oxford, there to be reasoned with as not sound in religion, in that he seemed to contemn the ordinances of the church.

The earl, either intending not to trouble himself in such matters, or else seeing himself not able to sustain his side of the argument, sent him up to London with a messenger and letters, and, desirous of clearing his own hands, put him in the hands of Bonner, the bishop, to be dealt with according to his discretion.

Finding no satisfaction in the lengthy conversation which took place between them, the bishop pronounced him a heretic, and threatened him with death, still keeping up his solicitations to induce him to return to the *mother church*; to which he ever replied, "No, my lord, I will not; for, if I had a hundred bodies, I would suffer them all to be torn in pieces, rather than abjure and recant."

Notwithstanding this, the doctors and lawyers, reiterated their calls for him to come over to the unity of the church;

but his unvarying answer was, that he would never go from the belief he was in as long as he lived.

Seeing that their efforts were all in vain, the sentence of death was pronounced upon him, which was to take effect on the ninth of February. His execution was, however, prolonged, and he remained in prison till the tenth of June, when he was committed to the hands and charge of Lord Rich, who had a sufficient delegation of power to enable him to finish the work.

While on his way to the scene that was to terminate his life, he used much exhortation to his friends, and improved every opportunity to familiarly admonish them. A little before his death, there were several of his intimate acquaintances and friends who had been in the habit of seeking his society, seeming to be greatly confirmed both by the example of his constancy and his pious conversation.

Being terrified at the prospect of such great suffering as was before him, they privately desired that in the midst of the flames he would show them some token, if he could, whereby they might be more certain whether the pain of burning were so great that a man might not keep his mind quiet and patient therein.

This he promised, and it was agreed between them that if the rage of the pain were tolerable and might be endured, then he would lift his hands above his head, toward heaven, before he expired.

Not long after, when the hour was come, he was led to the spot prepared for him, and there he mildly and patiently prepared himself for his doom.

He reasoned with his persecutors, of the innocent blood of saints, and, having offered a fervent prayer, he suffered the fire to be kindled.

His speech was taken away by the violence of the flame, and, when every one thought he was gone, as if mindful of the promise he had made, he threw up his burning hands with evident rejoicing, and forthwith from those who understood the matter there went up a shout that the victory was gained.

He immediately sank into the fire, and the life of this

constant and faithful witness of Christ's holy gospel was closed, it being the tenth of June, 1555.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

John Bradford.

LITERARY ATTAINMENTS; IS PERSUADED TO ENTER THE MINISTRY; IMPRISONED, AND FINALLY SUFFERS MARTYRDOM.

THIS man was born at Manchester, in Lancashire. His parents brought him up in learning from his infancy, until he attained such knowledge in the Latin tongue, and skill in writing, that he was able to gain his own living by his exertions in this direction.

He became servant to Sir John Harrington, knight, who in the great affair of king Henry Eighth, and Edward Sixth, which he had in hand when he was treasurer of the king's camps and buildings, at divers times in Boulognois, had such experience of Bradford's activity in writing, his expertness in the art of auditors, as also his faithful trustiness, that not only in those affairs, but in many others of his private business, he placed particular confidence in him.

Bradford continued several years in an honest and thriving way, after the course of this world, but his mind could not be satisfied with following after the perishable things of earth, which endure but a little time, and then pass away forever. The Lord had elected him unto a better function, and preordained him to preach the gospel of Christ, and for this He called this chosen servant to the understanding and partaking of the same gospel. In this he was so truly taught, that forthwith his effectual call was perceived by the fruits. He forsook his worldly affairs and forwardness in worldly wealth, and after a just account given to his master of all his doings, he departed from him, and with marvelous favor to further the kingdom of God by the ministry of His

Holy Word, he gave himself wholly to the study of the Holy Scriptures. The better to accomplish his design, he departed from the Temple at London, and went to the university of Cambridge, to learn by God's law, how to further the building of the Lord's temple. In Cambridge, his diligence in study, his profiting in knowledge and pious conversation, obtained for him the degree of Master of Arts in a short time.

Immediately after, he obtained an appointment at the college of Pembroke Hall; and that good man, Martin Bucer, so liked him, that he not only highly esteemed him as a friend, but oftentimes exhorted him to bestow his talent in preaching. To this Bradford always answered, that he was unable to serve in that office through want of learning; but Bucer was wont to reply, "If thou hast not fine wheat bread, then give the poor people barley bread, or whatsoever else the Lord hath committed unto thee."

While he was thus persuaded to enter the ministry, Ridley, that worthy bishop of London, and glorious martyr of Christ, according to the order that then was in the church of England, called him to take the degree of deacon. This being done, he obtained for him a license to preach, and gave him a prebend in his cathedral church of St. Paul's.

He labored diligently in the ministry for the space of three years. Sharply he reproved sin, sweetly he preached Christ crucified, ably he disproved heresies and errors, earnestly he persuaded to godly life.

After the death of Edward VI., when queen Mary had received the crown, he still continued faithful, till he was unjustly deprived of both his office and liberty, by the queen and her council.

The occasion of his deprivation was his interference to save one Bourne, who had excited the indignation of the people against himself, by a sermon on the Sabbath, with regard to popery. He was not permitted to finish, and Bradford being behind him in the pulpit, was called forth to stand in his place and speak to the people. He arose and spake of quiet and godly obedience, and when they heard his voice, a shout was heard, "Bradford, God save thy life,

Bradford ;" well declaring not only what affection they had for him, but also what regard they felt for his words.

The same Sunday in the afternoon, he preached at Bow church, in Cheapside, and reproved the people sharply for their misdemeanor. After this he abode still in London, with an innocent conscience awaiting the anticipated results of his plain dealing.

Within three days after, he was sent for to the Tower of London, where the queen then was, to appear before the council. There he was charged with the act of saving Bourne, which they called seditious ; and they also objected against him for preaching. He was first committed to the Tower, then to other prisons, out of which neither his innocency, piety, nor charitable dealing, could purchase to him liberty of body, till by death, he obtained the heavenly liberty, of which neither pope nor papist shall ever deprive him.

He remained a prisoner some time, during which, preaching, reading and praying, was all his life.

He ate only one meal a day, which was but very little when he took it, and his continual study was upon his knees.

He counted that hour not well spent, in which some good was not accomplished, either with his pen, study, or in exhorting others. He was not sparing of his purse, but gave liberally of what he had to his fellow prisoners.

Such confidence was reposed in him, by the keeper, and such liberty given him, that there was no day, but he might have escaped easily, had he been so disposed. Upon his promise to return again at night, he was permitted to go abroad to perform his gentle ministrations to the sick, and so fearful was he of breaking his promise, and being found wanting in fidelity, that he was always at his post before the time.

One of his old friends and acquaintances came unto him, while he was a prisoner, and asked him, if he sued to get him out, what he would do, or whither he would go ? He made answer as caring little whether he went or not ; but, if he did, he would still proclaim the gospel as time and opportunity were given him.

In his retirement he wrote many letters to his friends, breathing the spirit of christian submission, and showing the power of faith in enabling one to rise superior to the world. By his godly discourses and holy efforts he was successful in leading some to embrace the faith of Christ, and this, to him, was a sufficient reward for his own privation and suffering.

While walking with a friend one afternoon, he was suddenly accosted by the wife of the keeper, on whose countenance terror was plainly visible, and informed him that plans were even then in operation for the termination of his life on the next day. With that Bradford lifted his eyes to heaven and said, "I thank God for it; I have looked for the same a long time, and, therefore, it cometh not suddenly, but as a thing waited for every day and every hour; the Lord make me worthy thereof."

Thanking her for her kindness, he departed to his chamber, where he continued in secret prayer for some time, and afterward admitted his friends, with whom he had pleasant and holy converse.

About midnight he was carried to Newgate, when it was thought none would be stirring abroad; but, contrary to their expectation, a multitude were assembled to see him and bid him farewell.

He was held in such reverence and admiration that many who never knew him but by fame, greatly lamented that he must die; and even the papists themselves heartily wished his life.

But the time of his determined death was come. During a long examination which was held by his enemies, he remained true in his adherence to the gospel, and earnestly exhorted the people to repent and return to Christ. This was sufficient to excite the malice of those whose hearts were never moved by the grace of God, and he was carried from Newgate to Smithfield, surrounded by a guard of men.

As he neared the stake at which he was to be burned, he held up his hands, and lifted his eyes to heaven, and said, "O, England, England! repent of thy sins; beware of idolatry, beware of Antichrist; take heed they do not deceive you."

This called forth a rebuke from the sheriff, who ordered the work to be hastened, whereupon he was bound to the stake. Turning to one who suffered with him, he bade him be of good cheer; "for," said he, "we shall sup with the Lord to-night;" and then, embracing the reeds, he said, "Strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth to eternal life, and few there be that find it."

Thus he ended this mortal life; triumphed over every foe, through the abundant grace vouchsafed him by Almighty God; and thus entered upon a more glorious existence, even an eternal, an heavenly.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Ridley and Latimer.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF THEIR CONVERSION; PECULIAR DEVOTION TO RELIGIOUS DUTY; THROWN INTO PRISON TOGETHER; EXPIRE IN THE FLAMES SIDE BY SIDE.

THESE men are so identified with each other, the history of their lives is so closely intermingled, and the time and manner of their death being the same, it seems better, in the contemplation of them, not to separate their names.

They were pillars in the church of Christ, fearlessly defending the doctrines of the gospel. They were men ever memorable for their piety, learning and incomparable ornaments and gifts of grace, joined with commendable sincerity of life, and fervent devotion to the cause of truth.

Doubtless their names are written in the "Lamb's book of life," with the blessed saints of the *Most High*, while they stand crowned and enthroned among the glorious company of martyrs.

Ridley was born in the county of Northumberland, and, in his early years, was a child of uncommon promise. His

easy and rapid attainment at Newcastle procured for him an early entrance into the university of Cambridge, where he in a short time became so distinguished for his acquirements and singular aptness that he was promoted to high offices, and finally called to be head of Pembroke Hall, and there made doctor of divinity.

After this, departing from thence, he traveled into Paris, and at his return was made chaplain to Henry the Eighth, and afterward promoted by him to the bishopric of Rochester, and from thence translated to the see and bishopric of London, in king Edward's days.

In this calling he applied himself diligently to teaching and preaching the pure and holy doctrines of Christ; and he did it in such a manner as to secure willing hearers, and call forth the ardent attachment of the people for himself. Every holiday and every Sabbath he preached in some place, intent upon doing his Master's will, and leading some perishing souls to embrace the great salvation; and, to give an idea of his power, we give the figures of an English writer, who, in describing him, says: "The people resorted to his sermons, swarming about him like bees, coveting the sweet flowers and wholesome juice of the fruitful doctrine, which he did not only preach, but shewed the same by his life, as a glittering lanthorn to the eyes and senses of the blind, in such purity of life, that even his very enemies could not reprove him in any one thing." Besides he was learned, his memory was remarkably retentive, and his reading so extensive that, of right, he deserved to be compared to the best men of the age, as his works, sermons, and sundry disputations in the universities can sufficiently testify.

He was also wise of counsel, deep of wit, and very politic in all his doings. He sought to win all to the truth by his gentleness, and his attempts to induce the papists to turn from their erroneous opinions were always characterized by the same spirit of mild forbearance. An instance of the rare clemency of his nature is seen in the regard which he manifested for Mrs. Bonner, mother of the cruel bishop of that name, who lived very near him. He was in the habit of

sending for her to take dinner and supper with him, saying to the servant, "Go for my mother Bonner;" and, upon her arrival, greeted her with a cordial welcome, giving her the seat at the head of the table, never displacing her for the most lordly company, being wont to say, "By your lordship's favor, this place, of right and custom, is for my mother Bonner." How he was recompensed for this singular kindness is seen in the story of his wrongs and persecution.

Ridley's self-training is particularly noticeable, and shows little indulgence to his natural propensities and appetites. He used all kinds of methods to mortify himself, and was much given to prayer and contemplation. A little time he allowed every day for recreation, but most of it, from early in the morning, till eleven at night was spent in study of the Scriptures, communion with God, and pious labors for the benefit of others.

From the time he had been thoroughly won and brought to the true way he was as constant and faithful in christian effort as he had before been blind and zealous in his ignorant rejection. His attention was first particularly excited by reading Bertram's book of the sacrament, and his views afterward confirmed by a conference with archbishop Cranmer and Peter Martyr.

He was indefatigable in his attempts to support the happiness and peace of the church till the death of king Edward, when the whole state of the church in England was left desolate, and open to the enemy's hands.

After the accession of queen Mary to the throne, it is not surprising to hear of his persecution, for the heart of the proud queen had no sympathy with the pure, self-denying precepts of the Saviour's gospel, and their zealous, able advocates could expect no mercy at her hands.

Ridley was one of the first she sought to silence; and, for this purpose, he was committed to prison, first in the Tower, and afterward with the archbishop of Canterbury, inclosed in the common prison of Boccardo.

At length, being separated, he was committed to custody in the house of one Irish, where he remained till the day of his martyrdom, which was from 1554 till October 16th, 1555.

He was the companion of Latimer as they went to the stake; and they passed to the glories of heaven together, through the same fire.

We defer an account of this, to give a brief sketch of the life of Hugh Latimer, who was a disciplined soldier of Christ, and a valiant champion for the truth.

He was the son of one by the same name, who lived in Thirkesson, in the county of Leicester, a husbandman in good repute, with whom he was brought up till he was about four years old. At this early age, his parents discovered evidence of uncommon intellectual ability, and formed a purpose to train him up in erudition, and give him a knowledge of literature in general, which purpose they immediately put in execution. He was placed at school in the vicinity, where his improvement was so marked that, at the age of fourteen, he was prepared to enter the university at Cambridge, where he gave himself up to the study of such divinity as the ignorance of that age would suffer.

He was then zealous in the popish religion, and so scrupulous, as he himself confessed, that he thought he should not be lost if he only were a professed friar, and a servile observer of the Romish decrees, diligently saying mass. In this blind zeal he was a decided opposer to the professors of Christ's gospel, and he made an oration against Melancthon, in which he displayed the bitter opposition of his heart. He used his efforts to persuade the youth of the university to disregard the teachings of the pious man who discoursed to them upon the true divinity.

But, God had a work for this man to do, and his merciful purpose was to be accomplished speedily.

Thomas Bilney, being at that time a trier of Satan's subtilties, and a secret overturner of Antichrist's kingdom, seeing Latimer to have a zeal in his way, but not according to knowledge, ardently desired that he might become a convert to the true religion, and began to consider by what means he might win this zealous, ignorant brother to the true knowledge of Christ. He went to Latimer's study, and, in a familiar, earnest manner, unfolded the great truths of revelation in

such a light that the mind of the popish devotee conceived a desire to become illuminated with the blessed rays which proceed from the infinite source of blessedness.

He immediately forsook the superstitious fantasies of popery, and became an earnest student in divinity, an humble learner at the foot of the cross. His caviling was changed into pleasant conference with those faithful ministers he had, a short time before, derided; and his whole manner of life became different. Having himself drank at the fountain of living waters, and found his own thirst quenched, like a true disciple of the blessed Jesus, he pitied the misery of others, and longed to bring them to the sacred stream. He not only became a public instructor, but a private tutor to the rest of his brethren in the university, and, for the space of three years, spent his time partly in the Latin tongue among the learned, and partly among the simple people in his natural and vulgar language.

But Satan never sleepeth when he sees his kingdom begin to decay; so, now, perceiving this worthy member of Christ would do much toward destroying its foundations, found means greatly to disturb and molest him.

An Augustine friar, blindly yet zealously favoring all the delusions of popery, was troubled at the success of Latimer's practical preaching and feared the result upon his own party. He took occasion from his sermons to bring an accusation against him, which, for a time, interrupted the good man in his work, though, by no means, disheartening him, for his soul was stayed on a foundation which the combined forces of the adversary could not move. Notwithstanding the malice of his enemies, he still persevered in proclaiming "the gospel's joyful sound," with the favor of the godly, and, at times, even his persecutors were constrained to commend his gift.

He continued in close intimacy with Mr. Bilney, and they so frequently conferred together that the field in which they usually walked was, for a long time after, called, "The heretic's hill." Together they visited the poor and the sick, and told them of the plan of redemption through a crucified

Redeemer; but these works of benevolence were interrupted by Latimer being called before the cardinal for heresy.

He was, however, discharged at this time, and resumed again his wonted employment; but, he was allowed to pursue it peaceably but a short time, for, on very brief notice, he was summoned to Smithfield, whither he was conducted by an officer. He was brought before the council, patiently bearing all the mocks and taunts given him by the scornful papists, was condemned, and sent to the Tower, where, being assisted with the heavenly grace of Christ, he endured imprisonment a long time. So abundantly was he sustained by the Lord, that he was able not only to despise the terribleness of prisons and torments, but also to deride and laugh to scorn even the cruel proceedings of his enemies. He was very cheerful, and of a somewhat merry turn of mind, which manifested itself in his solitary confinement. Upon a certain occasion, when the lieutenant's man came to him and found him without fire in the frosty winter, and well nigh perishing with cold and hunger, he bade the man tell his master, "That if he did not look better after him he might, perhaps, deceive him." This remark was conveyed to the proper authority, whereupon an explanation was demanded of the strange speech. "I suppose," said Latimer, "you expect that I should burn; but, unless you let me have some fire, I am like to deceive your expectations, for I am like to perish with cold."

From the Tower he was sent to Oxford, where he met Ridley, with whom he was examined, and again had the sentence of condemnation passed upon him.

They were together remanded to prison, where they continued from April till the month of October, spending the time in brotherly conference, fervent prayer, and fruitful writing.

Latimer, however, wrote least of all, being very feeble, and somewhat oppressed with the infirmities of age.

As autumn drew near, with its fading, dying forms, the time of the execution of these holy men arrived, and they were led to the spot destined to be honored with their ashes.

Their tormentors, doubtless, thought to bury with them, in

a measure, the truth they had taught; but, their holy triumph, in the last agonies of dissolving nature, told a story of the mighty power of religion to sustain in the fearful extremity with more force than their words ever could have done.

As they stood side by side at the stake, the pious Ridley lifted his eyes toward heaven, and then, with audible voice and serene countenance, turned to his companion and said, "God is faithful, and will not suffer us to be tempted above our strength."

We forbear the recital of their severe and protracted sufferings, preferring rather to exalt that grace which so abundantly sustained them, and commend that principle of godliness which death itself hath not power to move.

They knew that faithfulness in the cause of Christ would only insure for them the flames of martyrdom, but these they lightly regarded, feeling that the sufferings of the present time were not worthy to be compared with the glory that should be revealed.

The scorching fire could well be endured for a little time, yea, even welcomed, when it opened for them the portals of heaven, and displayed the glories of the golden city.

Well might they subject their bodies to their merciless foes, when the Lord of Glory bent down from his throne to comfort them, and stood ready to receive their waiting spirits to his blissful presence, forever to sing the triumphs of redeeming love.

CHAPTER XL.

Christianity.

CHRISTIANITY; ITS NATURE, DESIGN, EFFECT AND FINAL ACCOMPLISHMENT.

IT IS not our purpose at the close of this work to present an argument in support of the claims of christianity, for those who have followed the "cloud of witnesses" as they have moved firmly and steadily on through successive centuries, animated by the same hopes, impelled by the same motives, and cheered by the same ultimate good, need not the calculations of *reason* to become convinced of the reality of the christian religion, and its demands upon them.

It may be well for us, however, to take a brief survey of the comprehensive system which opens to us through the sublime revelations of christianity, and see in its various and attractive charms, its beneficial and widely extended influence, its power and excellency, how unmistakeably it proclaims itself to be of Divine origin.

It is the grandest, most extensive, and deeply interesting subject that can engage the attention of man. Its peculiar *doctrines* and *mysteries*, its tenets and institutions, are such as bear the very "foot-prints of Divinity." Every reason exists why it should commend itself to the favorable regard, and cordial reception of all classes, in every condition of life. Sublime in the antiquity of its recollections, which go back to the creation of the world, ineffable in its mysteries, interesting in its history, celestial in its morality, attractive in its ceremonies, it is fraught with every species of beauty and interest.

It is the most humane, the most favorable to liberty, and to the arts and sciences, of all the religions, that ever existed. The modern world is indebted to it for every improvement, from agriculture to the abstract sciences, from the hospitals for the reception of the unfortunate, to the temples reared by the Michael Angelos, and embellished by the Raphaels. It

encourages genius, corrects the taste, develops the virtuous passions, imparts energy to the ideas, presents noble images to the writer, and perfect models to the artist. In short, it is the great operative and diffusive principle, which has dispelled the shades of darkness, given to mankind clear and correct views of the Deity and His works, enlightened and refined every thing to which its Divine spirit has been communicated by the gracious providence of the Almighty, throughout the world. It is an emanation from the source—the only source of *truth, beauty* and perfection—nay! it is the very manifestation of God himself.

Stupendous wisdom gave birth to this radiant form of christianity, and imparted its distinguishing characteristic—the invariable introduction of man in conjunction with God, whereas the false religions have separated the Creator from the creature. It is a religion of two-fold meaning, making the mysteries of the Divinity, and the mysteries of the human heart, go hand in hand; and by removing the veil that covers the true God, it also exhibits man just as he is.

What if *mystery* does appear in this depth profound? we must not be astonished, if *He*, who causes millions of worlds to roll without confusion over our heads, has indeed infused delightful harmony into the principles of a religion instituted by Himself, though we fully comprehend it not. We need not be astonished at His making the charms and the glories of its mysteries revolve in the circle of the most convincing logic, as He has commanded those worlds to revolve in their orbits, to bring us flowers and storms in their respective seasons. We may not always discern the order and beauty that actually is, but rather let us consider our dull perceptions at fault, than to think the chain of infinite results is wanting a single link.

When we look at the wonderful character of the great Author of christianity, we not only have an idea of its nature as heavenly and forgiving, but also see the infinite superiority of the christian religion over the so-called creations of men. We see one of obscure parentage, coming from an obscure corner of Judea, nursed amid sorrows and indigence, and

passing through the successive stages of infancy, childhood and youth, and at last selecting a band of disciples from among the lowest of the people; preaching nought but sacrifices, nought but the renunciation of earthly pomp, pleasure and power; the slave, the poor, the destitute—all that mourn, all that are afflicted, all that are forsaken by the world, are His delight; but power, wealth and prosperity, are incessantly threatened by Him. He institutes new relations among men, a new law of nations, a new public faith; He thus establishes His Divinity, triumphs over the religion of the Cæsars, seats Himself on the throne with them, and at length subdues the earth. He appears among men full of grace and truth; the authority and the mildness of His precepts are irresistible.

His bitterest enemies never dared to attack His Divine person, for the evidence was unquestionable that He came from above.

Had he descended from His celestial abode in all His power, it would certainly have been a very easy task to practice so many virtues, to endure so many afflictions; but herein lies the glory of the mystery; Christ was the "man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;" His heart melted like that of a merely human creature, and He never manifested any sign of anger, except against insensibility and obduracy of soul.

He appears the model of every virtue. *Friendship* beholds Him distinguishing John from the other apostles, or bequeathing His mother to his care. *Mercy* admires Him in the judgment of the sinful daughter of crime. *Pity* every where finds Him blessing the tears of the unfortunate; His innocence and His tenderness are displayed in His love of children; the energy of His soul shines conspicuous amid the torments of the cross, and His last sigh is a sigh of compassion.

If the purest morality and the most feeling heart; if a life passed in combating error and vice, and soothing the sorrows of mankind, be attributes of Divinity, who can deny that of Christ?

There are no philosophers of antiquity but have been reproached with some vices; the very patriarchs had their foibles; Christ alone is without blemish; He is the most brilliant copy of that Supreme beauty which is seated upon the throne of heaven. Pure and sanctified as the tabernacle of the Lord; breathing nought but the love of God and men; infinitely superior, by the elevation of his soul, above the vain-glory of the world, he prosecuted, amid sufferings of every kind, the important business of our salvation, constraining men, by the ascendency of His virtues, to embrace His doctrine, and to intimate a life which they were compelled to admire.

If the whole world were to raise its voice against Christ; if all the powers of philosophy were to combine against His doctrines, never can we be persuaded that a religion erected on such a foundation is a religion of human origin. He who could obtain adoration for a cross; He who held up suffering humanity and persecuted virtue as an object of veneration to mankind; He, we insist, can be none other than God, and as such, His teachings are entitled to universal esteem,—His religion to universal sway.

None but Christ could teach the world that *faith*, *hope* and *charity*, are the virtues alike adapted to the ignorance and the wants of man. From the moment He came into the world, and declared His kingdom of righteousness, an admirable balance, between strength and weakness, was established. Religion hurled all her thunderbolts at pride, that vice which feeds upon the virtues; she detected it in the inmost recesses of the heart; she pursued it in all its changes; and Humility, clothed in sackcloth, with tearful eye and modest bearing, became one of the primary virtues of the believer; while Faith, to new created vision discovered the true empire of actual existence, and the benefit of a redeemed inheritance.

How great the advantage which the christian religion has over the religions of antiquity! Such is the nature of man, that some form of belief, relative to his origin and destiny, life and death, are essential to him.

Blinded to a more spiritual service, various have been the

schemes which his ingenuity has wrought out; but their boasted mysteries have often had no affinity to man, and afforded, at the utmost, but a subject for reflection to the philosopher, or of song to the poet. On the contrary, the mysteries of the christian religion speak directly to the heart; they comprehend the secrets of existence.

Here is no question concerning a futile arrangement of numbers, no absurd theories of mystical superstition, but a plan executed confessedly for the salvation and felicity of the human race.

The Greeks and Romans, looking scarcely any further than the present life, and having no conception of pleasures more perfect than those which this world affords, placed the heaven of their imagination in a round of sensual gratification and unrestrained excesses.

No genial spirit of christianity poured upon them its cheering rays in the days of darkness and gloom.

Moral benefit was out of the question, and the miserable inflictions substituted for holy self-denial, was a poor apology for the peaceful rewards of the heaven-descended revelation, which Jesus proclaimed upon earth.

They were circumscribed on all sides by multitudes of absurd deities, and the gift of prophecy and wisdom, of mystery and religion, they planted in the dark recesses of boundless forests, fixing there their eternal abode.

They peopled the universe with elegant phantoms, and banished from the creation its solemnity, its grandeur and its solitude. It was necessary that christianity should expel the whole host of these, and restore to the grottoes their silence, and to the woods their scope for uninterrupted contemplation. Under our religion the deserts have assumed a more sublime and agreeable character, and the true God in returning to His works, hath imparted His immensity to nature.

It is under the christian dispensation alone, that nature has been delineated with truth, and here only is seen that admirable and perfect conjunction of truth and grace, which shine so preëminently in the gospel system.

Another prime characteristic of christianity is, that in

sight of the tomb, the judgment, and the eternal future, it displays all its sublimity. While the ancient religions consecrated the ashes of the dead, none of them ever thought of preparing the soul for that "undiscovered country from whose bourn no traveler returns." The sublime scene which all antiquity exhibited but once in the greatest of its dying philosophers, is daily renewed on the humble pallet of the meanest christian who expires.

Luminous indeed is the pathway of the christian, and in striking contrast is the dark, cheerless road, trod by the deluded votaries of a false religion.

Christianity also shines with peculiar luster, when compared with a system of mere worldly *philosophy.*

Philosophy has been called a "goddess," with head in heaven and feet upon earth; but whatever may be said of her, she attempts more than she accomplishes, and promises more than she performs. She may teach us to *hear* of the calamities of others with *magnanimity,* but it is religion alone that can teach us to bear our own with *resignation.*

With her humbler but steadier comrade, religion, philosophy may open new and desirable fields of investigation, and afford to the explorer much that is worthy, much that will minister to his comfort and improvement.

There is only one way in which philosophy can become popular; that which Socrates tried, and which centuries after was perfected in the gospel; that which tells men of their *Divine origin* and *destiny,* of their *heavenly duties* and *calling.* This comes home to men's hearts and bosoms, and, instead of puffing them up, humbles them. But to be efficient, this should flow down straight from a higher sphere. Even in its Socratic form, it was supported by those higher principles, which we find set forth with such power and beauty by Plato. In christian philosophy, on the other hand, the ladder has come down from heaven, and the angels are continually descending and ascending along it.

Stoic philosophers have boastingly nerved themselves to meet unmoved the ills and the sorrows of their mortal existence, and at last have been intercepted by the king of terrors,

in reckless uncertainty of their fate; but not to a life or death like this is christianity born to lead.

It has a holier, a more perfect design.

Framed for our afflictions and our wants, it incessantly exhibits to our view the two-fold picture of terrestrial griefs and heavenly joys, and thus creates in the heart those hopes and aspirations, which are the peculiar possession of every true believer.

The prime object, the great design of the christian religion, is to bring immortality to light, by removing the veil of impenetrable darkness and delusion from the earth, and to elevate a sinful race to holiness, happiness, and heaven. Its glorious mission is one of love, peace and joy, and comes to us stamped with the sacred seal of Divinity, with an authority that can not be questioned, a power that can not be resisted.

It is something wrought out with more than angelic skill, for those beings who veil their faces before the Eternal throne, desire to look into the glorious scheme, but are never permitted to know even the notes of the song of redemption. They are reserved for fallen recovered man to chant with wondrous melody, and those who join in the chorus are those whose hearts and voices have been attuned by the guiding Master of heaven.

A glance at the gracious, benevolent designs of the Divine Author of christianity, is enough to afford convincing proof of its superior and heavenly origin.

To promote the happiness of His people, every thing is done that is requisite; His grace is all-sufficient; His spirit able to conduct to regions of never fading bliss.

It is this particular which renders the christian religion delightful; its leading to the perfect, eternal life of heaven. It can not be denied but that we may draw from the light of reason strong presumptions of a future state. The present existence does not look like the infancy of human nature, which is capable of arriving at a much higher degree by maturity; but whatever solid foundation the doctrine of a future state may have in nature and reason, certain it is before the

coming of Christ, this doctrine was very much disfigured, and in a great measure lost among the sons of men.

The gospel sets the matter forever at rest.

Here we are assured of the resurrection of the body in a glorious form, clothed with immortal vigor, suited to the active nature of the animating spirit, and assisting its most enlarged operations and incessant progress toward perfection. Here we are assured that the righteous shall go into life everlasting; that they shall enter into the kingdom of the heavenly Canaan, where no ignorance shall cloud the understanding, no vice disturb the will. In those regions of perfection, nothing but love and unmingled felicity possess the soul, nothing but gratitude employ the tongue, and the plenitude of celestial happiness which christianity promises to the holy of heart, will be forever enjoyed.

There they shall see their exalted Redeemer at the right hand of Omnipotence, and sit down with Him on His throne; there they shall be admitted into the immediate presence of the Supreme Fountain of life and happiness, and, beholding His face, be further changed into the same image, from glory to glory. It would require the genius, the knowledge, and the pen of an angel, to paint the happiness, the blissful scene of the New Jerusalem, which human eyes can not behold till this mortal body shall be purified from its corruption, and dressed in the robes of immortality.

To fit for such a place, for such enjoyments, is the gracious design of our holy religion.

Its power to do this its course fully demonstrates.

Its effect upon society and the world is truly wonderful. Since its introduction, human nature has made great progress, and society experienced great changes; and in this advanced condition of the world, instead of losing its application and importance, it is found to be more and more congenial and adapted to man's nature and wants. Men have outgrown the other institutions of that period when christianity appeared—its philosophy, its modes of warfare, its policy, its public and private economy; but christianity has never shrunk as intellect has opened, but has always kept in advance of man's

faculties, and unfolded nobler views in proportion as they have ascended. The highest powers and affections which our nature has developed, find more than adequate objects in this religion. "It is a necessary and indispensable element in any great human character," said Webster, the lamented statesman. "It is the tie that connects man with his Creator, and holds him to His throne. If that tie be all sundered, all broken, he floats away, a worthless atom in the universe; its proper attractions all gone, its destiny thwarted, and its whole future nothing but darkness, desolation and death."

It is highly probable, that, but for christianity, the wreck of society and learning would have been complete.

It is impossible to calculate how many ages mankind would have taken to emerge from the ignorance and gross barbarism in which it would have been ingulfed. It required nothing less than an immense body of recluses, scattered over three-quarters of the globe, and laboring in concert for the promotion of the same object, to preserve those sparks which have re-kindled the torch of science among the moderns.

No order of paganism, either political, philosophical, or religious, could have rendered this inestimable service in the absence of christianity; and we must come to the conclusion, under every imaginable hypothesis that the gospel has prevented the destruction of society, for religion alone can renew a nation in its sources.

To judge of the genius of a nation the genuine philosopher does not merely seek to discover a few great men here and there; he examines whether the current of general ideas has taken another direction, and if human nature, in a mass, has acquired sounder notions of justice and humanity. Now, christianity has indubitably imparted these new ideas; it is the religion that is adapted to a nation, matured by time; it is, if we may so speak, the religion congenial to the present age of the world, as the reign of types and emblems was suited to the cradle of Israel. Its truths, so far from requiring the submission of reason, command, on the contrary, the most sublime exercise of that faculty.

Wherever christianity has gone she has carried civilization with her. She has rescued the people from a state of hopeless barbarism, and elevated them to refinement, intelligence and happiness.

Literature, too, has been baptized with her holy influence, and the turbid stream of fabled mythology, which once sent forth its deleterious waters, has become clearer and sweeter under the purifying process.

The intellectual part of man has been enlarged and refreshed, and mind assumed something of its royal dignity. Every department of learning has been hallowed by men of sanctified genius. Numberless instances come to the support of principles; and, a religion which can claim a Bacon, a Newton, a Boyle, a Clarke, a Pascal, beside a host of others, to say nothing of the fathers of the church, and the band of christian orators, such a religion, we say, may boast of being favorable to philosophy. It shines eminently conspicuous in the genius of history, for he, in fact, will be most intimately acquainted with man who has long meditated on the designs of Providence; he will be best able to fathom human wisdom who has penetrated into the depths of the Divine intelligence.

The designs of kings; the vices of cities; the unjust and crooked measures of policy; the restlessness of the heart, from the secret working of the passions; those long agitations with which nations are at times seized; those changes of power, from the king to the subject, from the noble to the plebeian, from the rich to the poor; all these springs will be inexplicable, unless one have, as it were, attended the council of the Most High, with those various spirits of strength, of prudence, of weakness, and of error, which he dispenses to the nations whose salvation or whose ruin he decrees.

Such a combination of things seems to have no natural principle in human events. The religious writer alone can here discover the profound counsels of the Most High, and find the explanation of the almost incomprehensible facts of history.

The desert places of the earth have, indeed, bloomed with

new beauty and freshness, under this fostering care, and we enjoy the *effects* of the blessing every day and hour of our lives, and taste its heaven-descended waters as they come conveyed to us through innumerable channels.

Excellent institutions have risen up, upon which religion has stamped her own image, and consecrated them to her service; and thus we might go on, and portray its genial influence upon the institutions that uphold, the manners that improve, or the arts that adorn the state of civilized society; but, it is the practical effect of religion upon the spiritual part of our being, its adaptation to our immortal nature that renders it a signal blessing to mankind in general.

The spirit of man sinking under the weight of burdens, which accumulate so rapidly in this life, finds relief and encouragement from the powerful hopes and motives that culminate around the great central-point of christianity. Every emergency of life is fully met, and aliment proportionate to the most intense craving is abundantly and freely offered.

Nothing, not even persecution, in its most terrible forms, can hinder the effect of this glorious power. It has been said that "never were such exalted virtues seen among christians as in those ages, when, in order to worship the Lord of light and life, they were obliged to secrete themselves in the bosom of darkness and death to carry out their designs."

It has led multitudes to the stake and the rack, from whence they have ascended, as in triumphal chariots, to the fruition of the blessed.

They went straight from the fires of earth to the full-orbed glories of the celestial city, leaving behind them a glorious testimony to the truth, power and beauty of that christianity which goes down with man through the "dark valley," and plants his feet securely on the further shore of Jordan.

These few pages allow only a brief glance at some of the benefits of the christian religion; but, these are sufficient to show that she possesses all that is beautiful as well as sublime, every thing "that is lovely and of good report," and that with

a comprehensive beneficence eminently her own, she has imparted to all who have embraced her faith not only the noblest code of morality, not only "the means of grace, and the hope of glory," but the means that have exalted and refined the human intellect, and all its various productions. Such a religion is destined to stand. Heaven alone was adequate to its production, and heaven stands pledged for its continuance. It is to go on, conquering and to conquer, till the kingdoms of the world become the kingdoms of Christ, and the echo of salvation at one corner of the globe shall awake its corresponding sound at the opposite extreme.

Christianity has undergone a severe test; but, from the trial by which it has been purified, it will arise triumphant. It stands the test of reason; and, the more we examine it, the more we discover of its grandeur.

Its mysteries explain man and nature; its actions support its precepts; its charity, in a thousand forms, has succeeded the cruelty of the ancients. It has lost nothing of the pomp of antiquity, and its ceremonies give greater satisfaction to the imagination.

We are indebted to it for every thing; and, were we even to divest it of all its supernatural evidences, still it would have sufficient left, in the sublimity of its morality, in the immensity of its benefits, and in the beauty of its ceremonies, to prove it to be the most Divine and the purest religion that was ever practiced by men.

Destroy christianity, and the world is undone; cherish and sustain it, and, like a wave of righteousness, it shall speed over the world with cleansing power, to regenerate and save an otherwise ruined race.

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